

## Police call in psychiatrist

## Fitness teacher held by two armed men in 36-hour ordeal

By STEWART TENDLER, CRIME CORRESPONDENT

JOANNA Grenside, the aerobics teacher who vanished from outside a Hertfordshire sports centre on Tuesday, yesterday described to police how two men armed with a knife kidnapped her and held her blindfolded in a bare, cold room for 36 hours.

She was so scared of her captors, who remained silent, that she kept the black cotton blindfold on even though she was not bound and was left for hours on her own. Throughout her imprisonment she was only given a cup of tea and a mug of water.

Yesterday Detective Superintendent Ian Whinnett, leading the investigation into the 35-year-old woman's disappearance, said it was obvious Miss Grenside had been subjected to a harrowing ordeal and it might take days to discover exactly what had happened.

Originally the police had said that Miss Grenside had been sexually assaulted. Yesterday Mr Whinnett said it was now unclear whether she had been raped or not.

Last night police said a forensic psychiatrist would now see Miss Grenside, who had become extremely distressed as she described what had happened to two specially trained women police officers. The interviews were stopped, although the young woman is the only witness police have at the moment and the only source of information for their investigation.

Miss Grenside, of Harpenden, Hertfordshire, was abducted after driving the sort distance from her home to the leisure centre where she was due to take a keep fit class of 60 people on Tuesday morning. Her locked car was in the car park about 100 yards away.

Police began an extensive search using a helicopter, and dogs in a hunt for her disappearance. They searched the area as her

family became increasingly concerned about her safety.

Miss Grenside's disappearance was first spotted by Dennis Davis, her boyfriend, who also works at the sports centre. He began a search and found her Ford Escort which led to the police hunt.

Miss Grenside reappeared on Thursday morning, walking into the leisure centre wearing the clothes in which she had vanished. She had been left in a nearby park and walked through the fog to the centre.

Mr Whinnett said that as the young woman left her car she was aware of someone behind her and felt a sharp object in the middle of her back. The attack was so sudden she was unable to use a rape alarm later found by police in the car park.

She was dragged to a vehicle which was driven by another man. From there the detective said Miss Grenside, sitting on the back seat and blindfolded, was taken on an hour-long journey which included a motorway before being taken into a dark and damp room at a house where she was held for the next 36 hours.

The room contained no furniture and the woman was forced to remain there walking about feeling her way. She was given nothing apart from the tea and water. When she asked to use the toilet, she was led blindfolded to a lavatory. She could not hear any sounds from outside the building.

Police yesterday renewed their appeals for anyone who was in the car park at Harpenden leisure centre on Tuesday night between 6.30pm and 7pm to come forward. They would also like to speak to anyone who was in Harpenden town centre or near the leisure centre yesterday morning, between 6.30am and 7.15am. They also issued a poster appealing for any information on the two men.



Equine protest: the Grand National winner Mr Frisk and Tracey Bailey, his trainer's wife, help to deliver the petition in Hyde Park yesterday

## Canoeist dies as gales return

By LIN JENKINS

AS GALES battered much of Britain yesterday an unmanned cargo ship ran aground in Devon after breaking its tow in heavy seas.

High winds and heavy rain brought flood alerts in many parts of Britain and motorists were warned of dangerous conditions as the two-week Christmas break started.

The 10,000-ton Demetrios hit rocks beneath Prawle Point near Salcombe and coastguards warned other shipping to stay clear. A Brixham coastguard spokesman said:

"The ship was unmanned and all her tanks empty, so there is no risk of pollution. We expect she will eventually break up."

Li Robert Morris, 26, of the Royal Naval base at Culdrose, Cornwall, died when his canoe capsized on the swollen river Ogwen, near Bethesda, Gwynedd. His companion made an unsuccessful attempt to reach him.

A 53-year-old motorist suffered head injuries and shock when his Reliant Robin was blown over in 60mph gusts on the A48 at Langstone, Gwent.

Torrential rain caused flooding in Wales and Wiltshire and the RAC warned of dangerous conditions in Kent and the Thames Valley. The National Rivers Authority issued red flood warnings on seven rivers in Wales. In Scotland there was drifting snow in Grampian region and flooding in the Highlands.

Heavy rain will continue today below a line from the Wash to the Bristol Channel.

Photograph and forecast, page 16

## Residents starving in homes for the elderly

ELDERLY people in nursing and residential homes are suffering from starvation because their diet is inadequate, says an official report (writes Jeremy Laurence).

The report, the first for 20 years into the nutrition of elderly people, by the government-appointed Committee on the Medical Aspects of Food Policy, suggests the problem may be more widespread than has been thought. It says that low weights among disabled old people living in

institutions are "particularly common", and calls for research into the possibility of "institutional starvation".

The normally cautious committee of medical experts says many elderly people admitted to hospital suffer from being inadequately fed and that this is not detected early enough.

Professor John Grimley Evans of Oxford University, a member of the committee, said giving extra food through a stomach tube could speed recovery.

"Tattersalls, the biggest auction sales in Europe, are already going to take the Houghton sale to Ireland because of this. It is the principal yearling sale in Europe and is a great loss to Britain. All we want is a level playing field so we can compete with others in Europe. It would be awful to destroy this industry."

The campaigners are seeking to persuade Norman Lamont, the Chancellor, to change VAT levels in the next Budget. Two years of negotiations with the Treasury and Customs and Excise have failed to reach a satisfactory conclusion.

Racing, pages 28 and 29

## Cross-Channel war of the stores

By NEIL BENNETT

RETAILERS in Britain and France are preparing to do battle across the Channel. Tesco announced it was launching its long-awaited battle into Europe with the introduction of its own-label goods into France.

The supermarket group, which is one of the hypermarket groups, is planning to open the first of its own-label stores in the Channel Islands. The chain in Maidstone, Kent, is a family-owned business, has 90 stores including two of the hypermarkets, and is owned by British Supermarkets who stock up on cheap wine, paté and

Brie before driving back to the ferry. Tesco is not planning to use its own name on the stores. But Sir Ian MacLaurin, group chairman, is planning to introduce own-label goods into France's stores, so French shoppers could soon find themselves tempted by les baked beans, le pork pie or even le chicken tikka chilled ready meal.

There is the possibility of some cross-marketing but Tesco is playing down the prospects for own-label tinned snails in the East End.

Carrefour is using a very different strategy in its assault on the British market. Ed, a

chain of medium-sized stores, will offer rock-bottom prices on basic goods sold in bulk. No tinned snails, rare claret or exotic unpasteurised cheese here, thank you. The fare is more likely to consist of vast boxes of washing powder or industrial quantities of low-fat spread.

The French company clearly believes the English favour their bank accounts more than their stomachs. For now the gastronomes of Kent will still have to cross the Channel and shop at Tesco under an assumed name to satisfy their greater culinary urges.

Tesco bridgehead, page 17

## Dunkirk veteran defeats club ban

By JOHN YOUNG

A DUNKIRK veteran who was expelled from his local old comrades' club was awarded £4,500 in damages in the High Court yesterday.

The court ordered that he be reinstated, but his success was clouded by the prospect that the club, in Salisbury, Wiltshire, may have to close because of a bill for costs of up to £30,000.

Harold Hewitt, 75, a former warrant officer and holder of the military medal, was expelled six years ago after he bugged a finance committee meeting with a tape recorder hidden in his clothes. He was accused of employing "Gestapo-style" tactics in trying to expose an alleged fruit machine fraud.

By a 10-2 majority verdict of the jury, the court declared the expulsion null and void, and granted an injunction restraining anyone from preventing Mr Hewitt entering the club, a branch of the Dunkirk Veterans' Association.

The action for reinstatement and damages had been brought against Steve Curtis, the club chairman, and Louis Carrier, the secretary. Both were said afterwards by their solicitor, Alan Willis, to be too upset to talk.

"They are very disappointed as they felt they were acting in the best interests of the membership," Mr Willis said. "The past six years have been a nightmare. The future of the club and its premises must be in doubt if Mr Hewitt pursues his claim for costs."

Mr Hewitt, a garage owner of Devizes, Wiltshire, said he had been vindicated and would carefully consider how the award for costs would affect the club. "From the bottom of my heart, I hope it will survive."

## Unworthy to govern

I now believe that Mr Major and his colleagues are unworthy to govern this great country of ours. Not only do they constitute the most incompetent set of rulers in living memory:



more seriously still, their standards of probity are so low as to evoke memories of the less than honourable 18th-century system - or at least the notorious Lloyd George post-war coalition of 1918-22, finally shattered in disgrace by a revolt of the Tory gentlemen. I accuse.

Paul Johnson (above), a conviction Conservative voter last April, has changed his mind. He explains why in *The Sunday Times* tomorrow

## Murder charge is due as tortured girl dies

By PAUL WILKINSON

MURDER charges are to be brought against six people detained in connection with the alleged kidnapping and torture of Suzanne Capper, the Manchester teenager who died in hospital yesterday.

The six, including two women and two youths aged 16 and 17, appeared before Manchester magistrates on Wednesday accused of the abduction and attempted murder of the girl. Police said yesterday that the charges would be altered to murder when the six appear on remand on Wednesday.

Miss Capper, 16, of Moston, Manchester, died early yesterday in the intensive care unit of the city's Withington Hospital. Her condition had deteriorated since her admission on Monday suffering from hypothermia, 80 per cent burns and other injuries. She told a workman who discovered her naked by the roadside in Stockport that she had been held for a week and tortured. Eventually, she had been dumped and doused with petrol which was set alight, she said.

Soon after she was admitted to hospital, her condition declined, she lost consciousness and was put on a life-support machine. Detectives who had waited outside her room were



Suzanne Capper as a bridesmaid

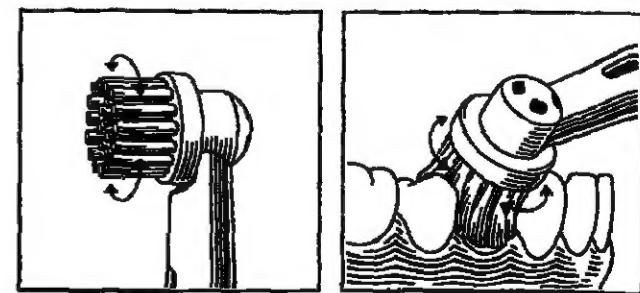
unable to ask her for details of what had happened to her.

Miss Capper's mother, Elizabeth, and other relatives were at her bedside when she died at 1.05am. Her father, John, 53, was at home and had to be sedated after news of his daughter's death was broken to him. "It was extremely distressing for all concerned," a hospital spokesman said.

Brian Langley, a neighbour, said: "John was devastated by what happened to Suzanne. He'll never get over it. I feel like I have lost a daughter. I've known the family for 10 years, we were very close. When she was a little girl, I used to bounce her on my knee. The whole community is devastated. We can't understand how she got into this situation."

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# THERE ARE A LOT OF HOT, SWEATY JOINTS IN NEW HAMPSHIRE. THE ANKLE ISN'T ONE OF THEM.

There are some very popular joints in the state of New Hampshire.

Not as many as in New York maybe. Or down in the South, where it gets hotter and sweatier than hades. But that's not surprising.

See, living in a state like New Hampshire with all those mountains, forests, rivers and lakes on your doorstep, folk have plenty to keep themselves busy.

Back-packing, rafting, climbing, trekking, cycling, skiing. Why, people in this part of America practically live in the outdoors.

Which could explain why it's also home to Timberland, the small but legendary boot, shoe and clothing manufacturer.

A company that has people who spend all their waking hours thinking about one joint and one joint only.

No, we don't mean the one on the corner opposite the workshop. We are, of course, talking about the ankle.

Or to give it its technical description: the syndesmosis or fibrous joint comprising the tibia, fibula and talus.

Obviously, Timberland's obsessive interest in this part of your anatomy is utterly selfish.

We do, after all, make a good chunk of our living selling footwear. If we don't know what gives or rather what doesn't give, ankle-wise, our customers could well decide to give us the proverbial boot.

Naturally, we do everything in our power to ensure that while your feet are in our boots they get to enjoy first class hospitality.

Take the Tan Buck, for example, sitting down there in the corner.

To the untutored eye it resembles a good number of boots you see around these days. But underneath, it's practically a scientific laboratory with a sole attached.

To start with, that innocent looking leather is impregnated with silicone and injected with natural oils and hot waxes. It's one of the reasons we can guarantee the boot 100% waterproof.

Keeping your joints dry is our way of making them feel right at home.

But that doesn't mean that keeping them warm doesn't get our undivided attention. As far as we're concerned this job can't be done

THE ANKLE  
IS INSULATED NOT  
SUFFOCATED.

found in a  
boots currently

Which is why we use B-400 Thinsulate in the tongue, shaft and quarter. And Ensolite, for extra insulation around the toes.

Sometimes we use even heavier insulation, for example in our high performance Iditarod boot. Then, to stop your feet 'cooking' we utilise another of Man's ingenious inventions.

Gore-Tex is a miracle fabric which has 9 billion pores per square inch, each one 20,000 times smaller than a rain drop but 700 times larger than a molecule of perspiration, thus allowing your foot to breathe.

As a result, your ankle, indeed your whole foot, will never suffer from overheating. Or get clammy from trapped perspiration.

Of course there's one thing worse than a hot ankle and that's one that is twisted, or, heaven forbid, broken. (According to that

incessantly pessimistic tome, 'Sports Injuries' by Doctors Lars Peterson and Per Renström, the ankle is the joint which most often suffers fractures. Don't say we didn't warn you.)

For our part, we've inserted a steel shank along the length of the Tan Buck boot to help keep it rigid, on the basis that if your boot can't twist then neither can your ankle.

The sole is made of a special dual density polyurethane which, apart from being lightweight and hard wearing, has shock absorbing qualities known only to people who've studied our price tags and still bought our boots.

Despite the predictions made by those two doctors we mentioned, the life of an ankle isn't all bad.

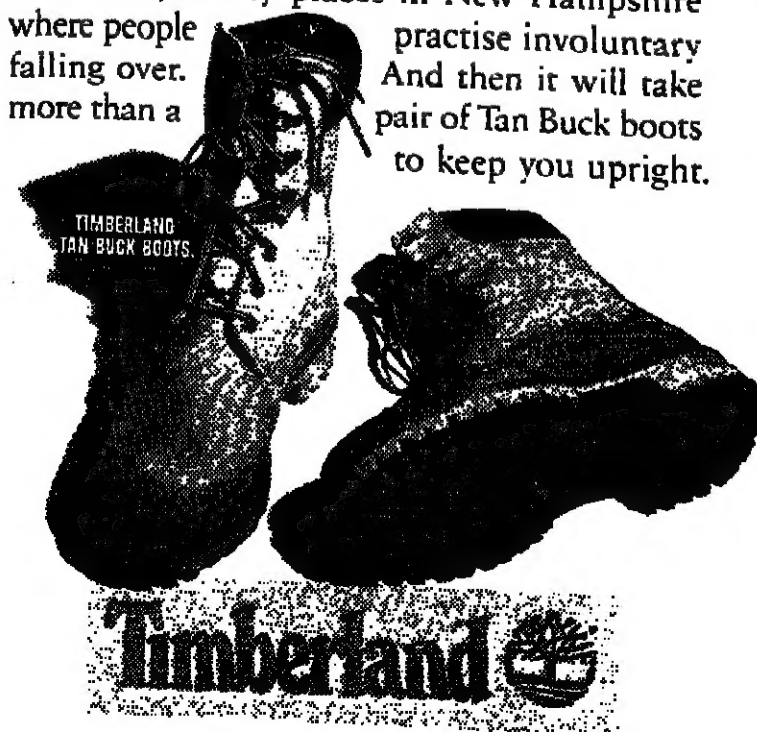
For instance, the inside of the Tan Buck is lined with soft glove leather.

And the collar is actually covered in the stuff.

What's more, it's contoured to fit snugly round the top of the ankle to keep out wind, rain and snow.

All in all, we reckon Timberland shows the ankle a pretty good time while it's in our hands. Come to that, our range of Weathergear clothing can probably protect and cosset every other joint in your body too.

Unless, of course, you happen on one of those hot, sweaty places in New Hampshire where people practise involuntary. And then it will take more than a pair of Tan Buck boots to keep you upright.



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## East Anglia grows fastest while North West declines

By KATE ALDERSON

EAST Anglia was the fastest growing region of Britain in the 1980s, with a 7.3 per cent population rise over the decade, according to the results of the 1991 Census of Britain, which were published yesterday.

Demographers say the influx is unlikely to continue apace. The past two years have seen unemployment there almost double, from 4.4 per cent to 8.2 per cent.

The 1991 census, a snapshot of the population of Britain on the night of April 21, 1991, shows that the North West of England was the greatest regional loser in internal migration over the 1980s, losing 4.3 per cent of its population to more prosperous regions.

The influx of migrants into East Anglia can be partially explained by its unprecedented economic growth during the late eighties, when cheap property and easy access to London and the South East attracted businesses and light industry to the region. The South West also gained from the economic boom. Its population rose by 5.5 per cent, the second largest increase in Britain.

According to Tony Fielding,

■ The 1991 census reveals that people migrated in search of employment during the eighties. Recession may end their quest



a lecturer in geography at the University of Sussex and author of *Migration and the Metropolis*, the South East region has benefited during the eighties from an influx of young adults from England and Wales.

"In sharp contrast with this, the South East is a net loser of people in their forties to most of southern Britain and espe-

cially to East Anglia, the South West and rural Wales. Only in the industrial Midlands and North does one find net flows towards the South East in this age group, and then the rates of movement are very slow."

Gains to the South East are made largely at the expense of midland and northern industrial areas and metropolitan cities. Tyne and Wear metropolitan county lost 5.4 per cent of its population. But inner London witnessed the greatest decline, down by 6.6 per cent since 1981. Mr Fielding's research confirms the ever-changing profile of the population of London. While a quarter of a million people move to London every year, the same number also leave the capital.

People in their sixties overwhelmingly migrate away from the South East, said Mr Fielding, and their preferred destinations are East Anglia, Lincolnshire and the South West. This explains why the proportion of people of pensionable age was highest in the South West of England.

22 per cent, and lowest in the South East. "Internal migration always decreases during a depression and you have to remember that half of the people who are migrating from region to region are simply transferring their job within a company. Others will migrate because of numerous reasons including unemployment or family breakdown," Mr Fielding said.

Wales had the highest proportion of households with a member stating they had a long-term illness, 32 per cent, compared to the national average of 24 per cent. The South East had the lowest proportion, at 21 per cent.

Statistics on households who have the use of a car demonstrate large discrepancies in disposable income. While a third of all households do not have a car, a decrease of more than 6 percentage points since 1981, 23 per cent of households had two or more cars available, an increase of 8 percentage points. Just over 18 per cent of households have no central heating, with the highest number in Yorkshire and Humberside, with 24.5 per cent.

The success of the Thatcher government's push towards home ownership is seen in the statistics. Those families owning their own homes jumped about a fifth, from 55.8 to 66.4 per cent of households, while those in rented accommodation decreased a comparable amount - from 44.1 per cent to 33.6 per cent.

Children under 16 accounted for 20.1 per cent of the population of Britain, down from 22.3 per cent a decade before, with the proportion highest in the North West (21 per cent) and lowest in the South East (18.9 per cent). People of pensionable age made up 18.7 per cent of the population, up from 17.9 in 1981.

The ethnic population in Britain was 5.5 per cent, with Indians forming the largest ethnic group at 1.5 per cent. There are no comparable statistics for 1981.

1991 Census County Monitor: Great Britain, Office of Population Censuses & Surveys, £2.00. Migration and the Metropolis: Patterns and Processes of Inter-Regional Migration to and from South East England, A J Fielding

## Broadcasters accuse licence chiefs of easy way out

### Channel 5 bid fails on audience and income

By MELINDA WITTSTOCK  
MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

BROADCASTERS were confounded yesterday by the Independent Television Commission's decision not to award the Channel 5 licence to the sole bidder, a consortium led by Thames Television.

The commission said last April that it could not guarantee that a fifth terrestrial channel would be launched because of problems in returning three million video recorders that would have suffered interference from Channel 5, but television executives had expected the ITC to give Thames the chance to make a go of it.

The ITC approved Thames's proposals for returning videos and its programme plans, but questioned the audience share and revenue projections contained in its business plan. It said it was not satisfied "with the level of investor commitment", despite backing from Time Warner Inc, which has a \$14 billion market capitalisation.

After twice extending the financing deadline at Thames's request, Sir George Russell, the ITC chairman, said he felt unable to do so again, despite a 12-week stipulated period for 100 per cent funding to be secured after the award of the licence.

Thames and its parent company, Thorn EMI, had taken a 35 per cent stake and Time Warner Entertainment had received board approval for a 10 per cent investment. Time Warner Inc had written to the ITC, pledging to take a further 25 per cent after the award of the licence. Thames had secured letters from Associated Newspapers, Pearson and two other American media companies, promising to take up the remaining 30 per cent shareholding if the licence was awarded.

All the potential investors had told the ITC that Thames's business plan was workable, despite the recession in advertising and a



Licence to kill: Sir George Russell announcing the ITC's decision yesterday

£150 million bill to return video recorders. The ITC had also received a letter from S. G. Warburg, the City merchant bank, guaranteeing funding.

Yesterday, many broadcasters privately criticised the ITC - which has a statutory responsibility under the 1990 Broadcasting Act to do everything in its power to launch Channel 5 - for not awarding the licence provisionally. "It betrays that the commission has no

interest in awarding it at all; that it regards Channel 5 as a pain in the neck which would give ITV and Channel 4 a problem. But that's what it was set up to do; the government wanted to increase viewer choice," one broadcaster said.

Last week, Michael Green's Carlton Communications, parent of Thames's ITV successor, had threatened to sue the ITC if it awarded the Channel 5 licence. Carlton feared that Channel 5, a network of stations due to

start in London next autumn before expanding to Manchester in 1994, would jeopardise its advertising revenue. LWT was also considering legal action against the commission.

Sir George denied that Carlton's threat had any bearing on his decision. "We took no regard of what it would do to anyone else."

The ITC now faces legal action from Thames.

Franchise refused, page 1  
Leading article, page 13

## Britons long for greener grass

By MICHAEL HORSNELL

LASHED by rain, recession and redundancy, a growing number of Britons are anxious to escape the gloom. People believe the quality of life is deteriorating so fast that one in four would prefer to live abroad, according to a survey published yesterday.

If the queue of people waiting to be interviewed by migration officers at the Australian High Commission in London is anything to go by, the British pioneering spirit is as strong as ever.

Andy Goodwin, 26, from Alton, Hampshire, who was made redundant 15 months ago, said: "I decided to travel the world and spent ten months in Sydney working as a barman. It's a beautiful country and I can't wait to get back. There isn't the stress that people endure in Britain, the

weather is excellent, the wages are good, the standard of living as high but the cost much cheaper."

Ian Baker, 30, from south London, who works in the public trust office of the Lord Chancellor's department, will emigrate in May. "I don't want to live in London for the rest of my life. Britons have a right to feel gloomy in the circumstances. The economy is not encouraging anyone at the moment and the climate is horrendous. The environment is so much better in Australia, and the standard of living."

The survey of 3,400 Europeans, including 1,000 Britons, by Global Market Research showed that 46 per cent of Britons believe the economy will worsen in the next 12 months, while a third say they are worse off

now than 12 months ago. Only 9 per cent believe the quality of life in Britain is one of the best, while 50 per cent regard it as average or worse than most. Only 72 per cent of those surveyed would like to remain in Britain.

However, Britons may not be the gloomiest people in Europe. In Germany, 70 per cent think their economy will worsen and 40 per cent of Italians would prefer to live in another country.

For the 25 per cent of Britons who want to get away, Australia may no longer be the lucky country. Although 44,000 emigrated to Australia in 1988, only 80,000 people from all countries will be allowed in during the year to July 1993. The reasons: recession and record unemployment.

## Marketing pioneer quits LPO

By ALISON ROBERTS  
ARTS REPORTER

JOHN Willan, the managing director of the London Philharmonic Orchestra, announced his resignation yesterday, ending an era of upheaval within London-based orchestras.

Mr Willan brought a commercial mind and marketing instincts to the orchestra, which won him few friends in traditional musical circles. His resignation comes at a time of great insecurity London orchestras other than the LPO. The Arts Council awarded the LPO a large grant increase this week, fuelling speculation about the formation of two national super-orchestras.

During his eight-year tenure, Mr Willan secured the LPO's residency at the Royal Festival Hall and substantially increased annual turnover.

Judy Grahame, former marketing director at the LPO, said that differences between Mr Willan and Nicholas Snowman, artistic director at the South Bank Centre, had not contributed to his decision to leave.

## Redundant officers braced for new battle in jobs market

By IAN MURRAY



Creasy: employers see soldiers as Rambo

THE 623 colonels, majors and captains who will be made compulsorily redundant from the army next year face gloomy prospects in the labour market. Gone are the days when former officers could walk into a top job, according to Philip Creasy, general-secretary of the Royal British Legion.

"We are now into a period when they will be competing with a lot of highly trained civilians who have been made redundant," he said. "Employers have misconceptions about the army these days and think they are a bunch of Ramboes. They fail to understand that an officer has potential, that he is amenable to training, fit, energetic and used to working extremely long hours."

The British Legion is so concerned about the problem that it is setting up a retraining centre. Yesterday, the day after the government announced that there would have to be compulsory redundancies, it took over a large area at Tidworth camp, Wiltshire, where it will establish a retraining centre

for officers, other ranks and their wives.

Much of the money needed to run the centre will come from the annual poppy appeal. "Our job is not just about looking after old soldiers but to help people who need help. These days they need help in finding work."

Sir John Trelawny of Goddard Kay Rogers and Associates, the executive recruitment company, said it was rare today for a company to consider an executive with-

out specific industrial knowledge. "There is a lot of talent among officers but it is difficult for us to include them on a short list. These prejudices are understandable. A naval flag officer told me it would be as likely for him to get a senior executive's job as it would be for a senior executive to be given command of a ship."

The defence ministry is so concerned about the problems of ex-servicemen finding jobs that it has employed a public relations consultancy to try to change the popular image of the trained fighting man.

"Employers should realise that former officers are excellent at personnel management, organisation and the logistics of handling hundreds of men and running a tight financial budget," a defence ministry spokesman said.

The Tri-Service Resettlement Organisation was formed this year to co-ordinate training and assistance for ex-servicemen. In October the Service Employment Network was launched to computer-match employers and former army personnel.

## Artist 'staged suicide attempt on Tate steps'

By A STAFF REPORTER

AN "ARTISTIC genius" was refused bail yesterday after a magistrate was told he tried to kill himself by driving up the steps of the Tate Gallery in London last Wednesday and attempting to set his sports car alight in a protest against a snub from the Arts Council.

Kenneth Whitehead, 24, a figure painter from Muswell Hill, north London, was arrested after a maintenance worker struggled with the artist to stop him setting fire to his Triumph Spitfire. He had doused the car in petrol, Horseferry Road magistrates' court was told.

Whitehead had attempted suicide to draw attention to a lack of funding from the Arts Council, said Alan Milford,

for the prosecution. "He is a risk to himself and the public, and he might commit another grandiose gesture to bring attention to himself and his genius."

Mr Milford said: "Psychiatric reports cast doubt on whether he intended to kill himself, but he did come close and was oblivious to the danger to other people." Rene Wong, the defence, said: "This is a talented artist who found himself pinched and punched, pushed and pulled by a demon urge to protest because of lack of support and funds from establishments such as the Arts Council."

Whitehead is charged with attempted arson on his Spitfire car.

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## Smith aims to regain Labour initiative on economic policy

By Philip Webster, Chief Political Correspondent

JOHN Smith has targeted the economy, Europe and the constitution as his priorities for next year as the Labour party's new policy-making machinery moves into operation with the aim of having a programme ready by 1995.

A new party body, known as the joint policy committee and chaired by the Labour leader, has approved the establishment of two committees on Europe and the constitution, which will report to next year's party conference. A fresh appraisal of economic policy, being conducted by Gordon Brown, the shadow chancellor, will go to the 16-member committee, regarded as one of the most powerful within the party.

The moves are intended to respond to internal criticism of a void in Labour's economic platform since the general election. Much of it has been caused by the government's decision to espouse many of Labour's policies, particularly in the recent Autumn Statement.

Mr. Brown, who has set himself the task of leading a national debate about the economic agenda, is drawing up plans for national and international intervention to boost the economy as he tries to win the battle of ideas with the Conservatives. His work will go to the committee, which is charged, among other things, with looking at Britain's economic prospects

and agreeing priorities for policies on taxation and public spending. The committee, whose members include Harriet Harman, shadow chief Treasury secretary, is seen as an important political device to control Labour's spending commitments and blunt Tory attempts to saddle Labour with a high-spending tag.

The committees on the constitution, to be chaired by Tony Blair, the shadow home secretary, and on Europe, chaired by John Cunningham, the shadow foreign secretary, will be the first-fruits of the party's "rolling programme" of policy-making. They were established by the joint committee at its first meeting when it set the policy work programme for the coming year.

As Mr. Smith explained when he launched the social justice commission on Thursday, Labour intends to target two or three areas of policy each year rather than coming forward with global policy statements that face amendment and overhaul. The committee will decide each year which policies are to be covered and will set up commissions. Their reports will go before the new 100-member policy forum and then the annual conference.

Mr. Smith is trying to avoid a repeat of Labour's experience in the last parliament, when Neil Kinnock's policy review effectively reached its

climax with the publication of *Meer the Challenge, Make the Change* in 1989, and was gradually overtaken by events before the April election. The aim of the new procedure is to have a more flexible approach so that the policy-making process reaches its peak as close as possible to an election. Specific policy areas can be reappraised but the party avoids wholesale overhauls every year.

IRA violence will not lead to political change, Mr. Smith said in Belfast yesterday. Just before he arrived for meetings with trade unionists, church leaders and security chiefs, the IRA fired three mortars at a police station at Markhill, co. Armagh. Nobody was hurt. "My message to the IRA is that they will not achieve political change by the use of terrorism. The whole of the United Kingdom, all the parties and the majority of its people are united in resisting terrorism," he said.



## Opt-out schools to keep extra cash

By John O'Leary, Education Correspondent

SCHOOLS which opt out of local authority control will continue to be funded more generously than their local authority counterparts, under proposals issued for consultation yesterday by John Patten, the education secretary.

A new funding formula will be based on the government's assessment of local education spending. However, grant-maintained (GM) schools will receive more money in areas where local authorities exceed the official norm for their own schools.

Critics of opting out have claimed that a formula based on standard spending assessments (SSAs) would leave schools in high-spending areas better off under local authority control. Yesterday's proposals would maintain the incentive to opt out by guaranteeing them a premium.

Baroness Blatch, the education minister, said: "There is clear evidence that individual local education authority (LEA) budgets and education SSAs are converging. But such a link to local authority budgets will ensure that funding for GM schools, and schools becoming GM in future, will continue, where necessary, to

reflect the level and movement in LEA budgets as well as their additional responsibilities."

The new arrangements will be piloted in some areas in 1994-5, where a significant proportion of schools have opted out. They will be introduced by authority later. Local authorities will retain responsibility for pupils with special educational needs at grant-maintained schools, and for school transport. Other items will be negotiated locally.

The proposals are intended to form the basis of a long-term funding regime for opt-out schools. Lady Blatch said: "This paper is good news for all schools that are already GM or are considering GM status. The central principle of our approach to GM funding is stated loud and clear: all GM schools will continue to receive additional funds which recognise their extra responsibilities compared with LEA schools in their area."

Local Schools Information, the pressure group opposed to opting out, said that the formula would not guarantee grant-maintained schools higher funding in the long term.

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## Lamont forecasts a buoyant Britain in coming year

By Philip Webster, Chief Political Correspondent

NORMAN Lamont yesterday predicted that Britain would be one of the more "buoyant economies" as senior ministers continued to sound a more optimistic note about next year's prospects.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer told foreign financial journalists: "There are some promising signs. We have an excellent base of low inflation, a competitive pound and the lowest interest rates in Europe."

His remarks came amid a flurry of economic statistics suggesting that recovery may prove elusive. The Bank of England reported a collapse in lending to consumers and companies last month - a message that was reinforced by the Building Societies Association, which released figures showing weak demand for mortgages.

This was balanced by a survey from manufacturers' members of the Confederation of British Industry reporting the first improvement in orders for seven months and a bigger-than-expected improvement in the balance of payments.

Because of a much improved performance by "invisible" exports, the deficit stood at £2,180 million, some £908 million better than the previous quarter.

Meanwhile, British Aerospace said it would lose 600 jobs from two of its regional aircraft factories because of the recession, and the telecommunications firm GPT said it was closing its plant in Kirk-

caldy, Fife, with the loss of 250 jobs.

Mr. Lamont, describing the pound's departure from the European exchange-rate mechanism in September as a setback, nevertheless made plain there could be no prospect of an early return. Britain could not contemplate going back in "until the recession has been put firmly behind us", he said.

The Chancellor's assessment followed other cautiously upbeat remarks made by the prime minister and his cabinet colleagues in recent days. He said that Britain, helped by "nascent" recovery in the United States, "may be one of the more buoyant economies next year."

He suggested that next year Britain might perform better economically than Germany. Mr. Lamont, however, delivered a stinging rebuke to the European Community for its refusal to grant free access to Japanese cars made in Britain when the single market starts next month.

He wished that Europe would get over its "rather adolescent obsession" with Japan.

Mr. Lamont dismissed suggestions that the ERM will collapse. Obviously the ERM "is not bust up", he said. He added that the French franc deserved greater market support on the grounds that the French economy performed better than the German economy.

Shares rise, page 17

## Welsh tongue pledge fails to placate

By Tim Jones

WELSH yesterday came close to becoming an official language in Wales when new laws to give "yr hen iaith" - the old tongue - equal status with English were announced. Sir Wyn Roberts, the Welsh minister, said it was an historic day for the principality but the Welsh Language Society condemned the measure as feeble and promised to continue its campaign of civil disobedience.

The government will establish a 15-member Welsh Language Board with powers to secure the use of Welsh in the public sector. It will also give grants to encourage use of the language. But privatised industries such as water and electricity will not be affected because the government does not want to put them at a disadvantage with rival firms in the rest of the UK.

Dafydd Lewis of the Welsh Language Society said: "This

bill does not go far enough. Our campaign of occupying government buildings and daubing their walls with slogans will continue."

Dafydd Wigley, MP for Caernarfon and president of Plaid Cymru, also said the Welsh language bill was inadequate. "It is light years behind public opinion in Wales. Unless it can be radically strengthened in Parliament, it will stand as a testimony to a missed opportunity to give the Welsh language the status it deserves."

Clwyd Kinnock, wife of the former Labour leader, faces competition from five other women and 33 men to be Labour candidate for the European parliamentary seat for South East Wales. A short list of up to ten names for the seat, which has a Labour majority of 108,488, will be drawn up and the winner chosen by a postal ballot.

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# Grand strategy eludes Nato in its hunt for role in Yugoslavia



Morillon: demands action, not words

THE divisions within the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation over what military action to take against the Serbs has brought into the public domain disagreements over the broader issue of the alliance's future after the end of the Cold War.

Peacekeeping and, potentially, peacekeeping outside the traditional alliance borders are supposed to be the new key roles for Nato. However, the fighting in Croatia and then in Bosnia-Herzegovina caught the alliance off balance. Now, instead of unity and consensus — distinguishing features of the Nato family for most of the Cold War period — there are so many different views over the way ahead that even the grand strategy for restructuring all

## WESTERN ALLIANCE

*Peacekeeping and peacemaking are supposed to be the allies' new tasks. Croatia and Bosnia caught them off balance, Michael Evans writes*

the forces in central Europe has gone wrong.

Three alliance members — Norway, Belgium and The Netherlands — are planning to cut their armies by such a substantial number that there will not be enough soldiers around to form all the proposed "main defence forces" which, along with multinational rapid reaction units, are to replace the layered Cold War corps in central Europe. Re-thinking is now in progress.

The clashes between the French and Americans over peacekeeping and who should have the lead are also becoming almost a daily occurrence at Nato headquarters. So much so that some officials are beginning to wonder whether former Warsaw Pact countries which are knocking on Nato's door might have second thoughts about their applications for membership.

With these strategic questions causing earthquake fault

lines, the Bosnian issue has served only to widen the cracks. Potentially, the most damaging is that emerging between the Americans and the British. The British government is being understandably protective towards the British troops.

John Major and his senior cabinet colleagues do not want to destroy the precarious position of the battalion battle group in Vitez, central Bosnia, by advocating military action against the Serbs to enforce the "no-fly" zone, while the soldiers are distributing food in Croat-Muslim areas.

One senior British official said pointedly this week that there was a division between those with troops on the ground and those "who were just speculators" — an implied

dig at the Americans who have avoided sending any soldiers to Bosnia apart from 15 officers to the UN headquarters in Kiseljak.

Unfortunately for Britain, France, which has the largest number of troops in Bosnia, has not supported Mr Major. President Mitterrand wants the "no-fly" zone enforced and has not highlighted the potential risks that might follow for French humanitarian soldiers who are based in Bihac on the Serbian side in northern Bosnia. The decision by France to take a tough line is, one suspects, not totally disconnected to the wider issue of which organisation is to play the primary role in peace enforcement. France is determined it should not be Nato.

So the French, encouraged by a bellicose chief of staff, are in the forefront of those calling for action. They also have their man in charge on the ground. Major General Philippe Morillon, commander of the 7,000 United Nations troops in Bosnia. After months of painful diplomatic peacemaking between the leaders of the warring factions, General Morillon is now also of the view that action, not words, is required. Behind the British position are the Spanish and Canadians who, along with the British and French, are the only countries to have sent an infantry battalion to Bosnia. Canada has about 1,100 soldiers in northern Bosnia, kicking their heels outside Banja Luka, and Spain has 700 operating from Mostar and Split.

With the outgoing administration in Washington and President Mitterrand in the same camp for once, there seems little chance that the British argument for caution will survive much longer.

Everyone in Nato knows that the steps taken over the next few weeks, even though the decision will be made by the UN Security Council, will point the way ahead for the alliance. For military action of any kind will involve Nato members. This is when the fault lines now becoming increasingly visible, will either close up or widen. There is no longer any scope for papering over the cracks, a familiar ploy of the alliance during Cold War rifts over such issues as short-range nuclear weapons and burden sharing.

## Eastern nations pledge to join in peacekeeping

By TOM WALKER IN BRUSSELS, NICHOLAS WOOD IN OTTAWA AND OUR FOREIGN STAFF

### MILITARY INTERVENTION

NATO's former Warsaw Pact adversaries took the historic step yesterday of saying that they are willing to take part in joint peacekeeping missions in Europe. Manfred Wörner, the secretary-general of the Atlantic alliance, said that agreement was a remarkable step.

Herr Wörner added that any problems with France, which is still opposed to Nato having overall command of security matters in Europe, were "theoretical", and declared: "In practice, it does not hinder our concrete actions."

French diplomats have become increasingly wary of the new-found American bullishness in the Balkan crisis, especially as there are no US troops in Bosnia.

In its final statement, the North Atlantic Co-operation Council, which groups Nato

and the former Warsaw Pact countries, said it was "profoundly disturbed by the deteriorating situation in the former Yugoslavia". Beyond the rhetoric, however, there was little commitment to action, and the issue of a "no-fly" zone over Bosnia was made no clearer.

Many ministers said they were satisfied, however, by Nato's commitment on Thursday to help the United Nations to establish a "no-fly" zone. "We can use force only to protect humanitarian convoys and to enforce a 'no-fly' zone," said Krzysztof Skubiszewski, the Polish foreign minister. "But we should not get involved on a bigger scale. It would mean long-term war."

There was no sign that former Warsaw Pact troops will move en bloc to support Nato action. "Our countries are ready to support and contribute on a case-by-case basis to peacekeeping operations under UN authority," the statement read. In America, Lawrence Eagleburger, the Secretary of State, said he welcomed the support of the East European countries.

John Major, who visited Canada on his way to Washington, has won Ottawa's backing in his attempt to persuade America and France to adopt a less hawkish approach to the enforcement of the "no-fly" zone over Bosnia. Today, the prime minister will urge President Bush, in

talks at Camp David, to pull back from an immediate threat to shoot down any Serbian aircraft defying the ban. He will argue that, as in southern Iraq, the passing of a resolution by the UN Security Council, authorising enforcement of the air exclusion zone, could be enough to persuade the Bosnian Serbs to ground all flights over the former Yugoslav republic.

After talks with Brian Mulroney, his Canadian counterpart, in Ottawa on Thursday night, Mr Major flew to Washington yesterday believing that he has an ally in his search for a "measured" enforcement of the zone. Like Britain, Canada has about 2,000 troops in Bosnia protecting United Nations humanitarian relief convoys.

Mr Major's task today is to curb American enthusiasm for the most stringent enforcement of the zone by impressing on President Bush the dangers to peacekeeping forces of precipitate action.

A joint announcement paving the way for an enforcement resolution in the security council is expected tomorrow. The prime minister said it was important to be precise about the meaning of enforcement. It could cover measures to ensure aircraft did not take off, forcing them down, or the "most severe form": shooting them down. Mr Major's strong preference at this stage is for measures limiting the likelihood of outright aerial combat over Bosnia involving Western warplanes.

Douglas Hogg, the Foreign Office minister, will leave today on a four-day visit to southeastern Europe to discuss the crisis in the former Yugoslavia. The Foreign Office said yesterday that Mr Hogg would meet President Tudjman of Croatia in Zagreb.

However, his first stop will be in Bucharest, where he hopes to meet Teodor Melescanu, the Romanian foreign minister, to discuss co-operation on the enforcement of UN sanctions against Serbia and Montenegro.

In New York yesterday, the security council condemned reported mass rapes of Muslim women in Bosnia and requested UN armed escorts for European human rights monitors investigating camps where the atrocities occurred.

In Bosnia, Marine Captain Gaston Le Henaff, a French officer with the UN Protection Force, was wounded by a sniper at Sarajevo airport on Thursday. He will be flown to France after treatment.

Kohl seeks to widen field of Bundeswehr operations



THE German Bundeswehr is an army that was never meant to fight. Only a handful of its soldiers have ever heard a shot fired in anger. Now Helmut Kohl, the chancellor, wants to be able to use German forces in peacekeeping operations outside the Nato area.

Until recently, the only circumstances in which German units could have become engaged were those of a Soviet attack on the West. Bonn wishes to see the force increasingly engaged in United Nations, and possibly Nato, operations.

The mission in Somalia announced by Herr Kohl this week has been criticised by the opposition Social Democrats as contrary to the constitution. The Social Democrats have offered to help change the constitution, but will impose various conditions, trying to prevent the troops from becoming involved in "peacemaking".

These conditions are met by the government's present orders, which speak of the German troops being sent only when the others have "restored order". The bulk of the 1,500 or so soldiers would be transport troops, medical teams and engineers, guarded by 200 to 300 infantry.

Bonn has insisted that because of Nazi atrocities in Yugoslavia during the second world war, there can be no question of sending German ground troops there. However, Herr Kohl carefully did not rule out using the Luftwaffe to help enforce an air-exclusion zone. German generals are very anxious not to get involved. Some even argued against German naval participation in checking violations of the UN trade embargo in the Adriatic.

Friedrich Bohl, Herr Kohl's chief of staff, said yesterday that the Somali operation is

covered by the present constitution, which allows participation in "systems of collective security". It has also been emphasised that the troops would be volunteers.

The reform now proceeding in the Bundeswehr is designed to produce a two-class army: a large force of conscripts for national defence, and smaller, better equipped and motivated forces for service abroad. The Franco-German corps, due to be completed by 1995, will belong to these.

The sensitivity in Germany of anything to do with armed force is a reaction against the militarism that led the country into two world wars. Herr Kohl says that involvement in UN operations is not just a German duty as a UN member, but will also help Germany get a permanent seat on the UN Security Council. The chancellor's moves highlight the new Germany's search for a higher world profile.

## Children of Balkans get lesson in hardship

FROM RUTH GLEDHILL IN VITEZ

WHAT remains of the Muslim Burzic family was huddled together on a blanket-covered mattress in a crowded room that smelled of socks, damp washing and unwashed clothes.

Sajma Burzic, 27, cuddled her year-old daughter, Dursuna. Her husband is in a concentration camp in Serb-occupied territory. Her mother and father are with her and 400 other refugees, crowded

into a former monastery and school in Travnik, a few miles from the front line.

They told us that they pray five times a day but cannot go to the mosque near by because there are no washing facilities to clean themselves as their religion demands. They are shelled almost nightly by Serb gunners in the hills overlooking the town.

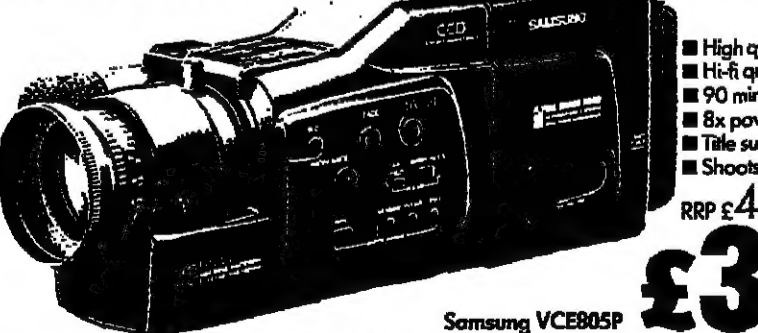
In a similar room next door, Sanela Zenkic, a refugee from Prijedor in eastern Bosnia, teaches the 100 children housed in the school to read, write and sing Bosnian anthems, although some children as old as 11 and 12 have lost the will or ability to read after seeing their fathers, uncles and grandparents shot dead. Sanela is trying to organise a New Year party but does not have enough presents to go round.

The refugees in the school and 200 in the gymnasium next door, which is served by one small shower room, have been given rice and old clothes but cannot keep warm. They need vitamins and higher quality food if their survival through the winter is to be guaranteed.

Testament of destruction: Paddy Ashdown, the Liberal Democrat leader, visiting a cemetery of Bosnian war victims in Sarajevo before returning to London. Yesterday, after his six-day visit to former Yugoslavia, he said that a "watershed moment" had been reached in the search for peace, adding that the Serbs now desperately wanted peace. The international community must be prepared to act to ensure the maintenance of a Muslim homeland and prevent Sarajevo's fall.

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# Pentagon braced for casualties in Somalia

■ As President Bush considers a Christmas trip to boost US morale, defence planners are urgently debating whether they should order their troops to disarm the gunmen

By JAMIE DETTMER IN WASHINGTON AND OUR FOREIGN STAFF

AS SOMALI gunmen regained their nerve yesterday and began to venture out on the streets of Mogadishu in full view of American and French troops, Pentagon officials acknowledged it was only a matter of time before there are US casualties.

American marines came under fire for the first time in Baidoa while on night patrol on Thursday. Gun battles between rival clans were reported to have spread in Mogadishu and it was confirmed that three Somali gunmen were killed on Tuesday night after they shot at a group of marines in the American embassy compound. French troops also came under fire on Thursday night in the capital, but none was hurt.

The reappearance of the gunmen has renewed a policy

debate in the Pentagon over whether American troops should forcibly disarm clan members. General Joseph Horst, commanding officer of American Central Command, said in Mogadishu that a reduction in arms was the key to success for the American humanitarian mission in Somalia. "What we are trying to achieve is arms control," he said. But he failed to detail how this would be achieved.

A senior Bush administration official said last night that the president was considering making a Christmas visit to Somalia. "The trip would be to bring cheer to the troops and thank them for what they are doing there." The official added that the visit, which is considered dangerous by the Secret Service, must first clear security hurdles.



## India sends three famine relief ships

By OUR FOREIGN STAFF

INDIA is sending three ships to Somalia with relief supplies to join Operation Restore Hope, launched by America under the aegis of the United Nations.

The three ships being sent to Somalia will be used primarily to supply along the coast with food stocks. The Indian government has also offered to send 3,000 ground troops, including a medical team. They will join 700 Pakistani troops already in Somalia. Islamabad says that it plans to send additional troops.

In another development yesterday, Japan, eager to avoid international criticism about its decision not to send its own troops to Somalia, pledged about \$62 million to fund other nations' military operations there.



Gun law: Somalis turning in their weapons to a US marine before entering Baidoa airport yesterday. The guns are returned on leaving

## Two Kims fight for key to Blue House

By JOANNA PITMAN

SOUTH Koreans turned out in force yesterday to vote in a milestone presidential election that will send the country's first civilian leader to the Blue House in more than 30 years.

Over three-quarters of the electorate, wrapped in rugs to ward off sub-zero temperatures, cast their votes, reflecting the nation's continuing passion for a democratic tradition that is only five years old.

The two Kims — the ruling Democratic Liberal party candidate Kim Young Sam and the main opposition Democratic party's Kim Dae Jung — appeared to be neck and neck as the month-long campaign officially closed on Thursday.

The winner is likely to be determined, however, by the performance of the third main candidate, Chung Ju Yung, the founder of Hyundai and the workers' hero who rose from an impoverished and uneducated rice delivery boy to found South Korea's most powerful industrial conglomerate. His professional campaign has tapped his company's workforce of 100,000 for campaign staff and was showing signs of stealing much of Kim Young Sam's voter support last week. South Korea does not permit official exit polls, but unofficial television network polls showed Kim Young Sam to be taking a marginal lead as the polling booths closed last night.

If this election is perceived to be an equitable one, which is by no means a certainty, it

could prove to be a landmark not only in the democratic development of South Korea but also in terms of the development of the Asian region, where in many countries capitalism has been encouraged but democracy has remained unwelcome.

"This is a genuine competition for office between and among parties, which is a lot more than can be said about elections in most other Asian countries, even bona fide democracies such as Japan," Han Sung Joo, a professor of political science at Korea University, said.

The campaign has had its low moments. There has been no shortage of accusations, ugliness and dishonesty. The electorate has been treated to the unedifying spectacle of all three main candidates attacking one another. The tempo of insults has been raised in the past week and claims of corruption have been rife.

In contrast to the last presidential election, in 1987, which delivered the former military leader, Roh Tae Woo, into the Blue House, there has been more clarity, more openness and more thoughtful policy debate, however. Having lived through 26 years of military authoritarianism between 1961 and 1987 and then five years of semi-populist rule, marred by strikes, the people are ready to embrace their new leader and settle down to an era of steady economic growth.

## Taiwan voters take another step on road to democracy

FROM JAMES PRINGLE IN TAIPEI

HALF of Taiwan's 20 million people vote today in the first election for the island's parliament since veteran Nationalist politicians were forcibly retired.

"In effect, these are the first free parliamentary elections here in over four decades," said one foreign diplomat. The veterans, or so-called "old thieves", held phantom Chinese mainland seats since 1949, the year Mao Tse-tung's Red Army drove Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang from the mainland.

One woman candidate borrowed idols of Chinese gods from temples and drove them through Taipei in a hundred campaign lorries to draw the votes of believers. Another candidate for a minority party, Hsu Shao-Tan, a former nude dancer, appeared topless at a

election rally. Her slogan was: "Hsu Shao-Tan loves everybody." A more sinister note was struck when a campaigner was shot at yesterday but saved by his bullet-proof vest.

Up to the last minute, mud slinging allegations of vote-buying were legion. At one rally, 10,000 supporters of the opposition Democratic Progressive Party heard speakers call for a march on the prime minister's residence. Elsewhere, to mixed political and Christmas jingles, a Democratic Progressive candidate burnt Kuomintang and China flags, accusing the ruling Kuomintang of "collaborating with Peking to sell out Taiwan".

For all the hype and ballyhoo, a more open political process is emerging and the new parliament will become the centre of political power in Taiwan, with law making responsibility, control of budgets and the power to select the island's prime minister. "The more democracy we have, the stronger we are," Jason Hu, a government spokesman, said. Taiwan is also buying American and French warplanes to counter China's military might.

With these elections, the economically burgeoning island wants to show the mainland, with whom its businessmen are now doing deals, cashing in on cheap labour and land, that a peaceful evolution to at least a limited democracy is possible in a



Chiang Kai-shek: driven from China in 1949

### NEWS BRIEF

## Afghan raiders target refugees

Kabul: Thousands of refugees are still fleeing to Afghanistan from fighting in Tajikistan, despite the risk of being robbed by raiders who steal the vehicles the exiles used in their escape (Andrew Finkel writes). According to a medical relief agency working in the northern Afghan city of Mazare-Sharif, many of the refugees arrive suffering from bullet wounds. There are also reports of rioting within the three main refugee camps.

An estimated 35,000 people have escaped into Afghanistan from Tajikistan. Although this is a lower figure than the international aid community first produced, it represents a substantial problem for a country more used to generating its own refugees. Calculations of the numbers on the Tajikistan side of the border and of those refugees still to come vary from 20,000 to ten times that number.

## UN men freed

Phnom Penh: Khmer Rouge guerrillas in central Cambodia released 46 UN peacekeepers who had been held northwest of the capital. It was not clear whether the captors had received written instructions from a Khmer Rouge commander, General Men Ron, to free them. (AP)

## Budget cut

Tokyo: The Japanese government lowered the budget ceiling of its five-year defence programme by \$2.9 billion but announced that it would buy four Awaas (Airborne Warning and Control System) aircraft from America, costing \$289 million each. (Reuters)

## Return trip

Nairobi: Five hundred Ethiopians, provided with cereals and cooking oil, voluntarily returned to their homeland, marking the start of a repatriation programme of about 50,000 Ethiopians from refugee camps in northern Kenya, the UN said. (AP)

## Poll boycotted

Djibouti: The first multiparty elections in this tiny East African nation's 15 years of independence took place in the face of an opposition boycott to mark the anniversary of a confrontation with security forces in which 30 people died. (AP)

## Work-shy Russians look for capitalist gain without pain

FROM ANNE McELVOY IN MOSCOW

*'Oh Russia, Russia! What a lot of useless idlers you carry on your back'*  
Chekhov,  
The Fiancée, 1903

The young man in search of an interpreter's job had a near-impeccable English accent, a promising CV and, we fondly imagined, would be keen to work for dollars. As it soon turned out, he was much keener on the dollars than the work.

He sat back, heard the offer and considered. "Well, all right, but I can't start till twelve because I have a morning job." Could he stay until the end of the evening news? "It depends. There must be flexibility to allow me to do my shopping."

The idea that a job was something around which shopping and part-time earning seems had to be fitted, rather than vice-versa, came as a shock to him. Russians have adapted with the impressive speed to the culture of buying and selling but are less susceptible to the work ethic. The "jobs wanted" column in weekly newspapers such as *Vse Dlya Vas* (Everything For You) makes entertaining reading.

For an ideology which glorified labour and the working class, communism managed to produce a society with a deep aversion to work. Not that work ever had a particularly good name in Slavic culture. Compare British, German and Russian proverbs on the subject and

you will find that while the first two recommend labour as a moral straightener, the Russians prefer to avoid it. The old saying had it that "Work is a wolf. It will not run away into the forest" — i.e. "don't chase it" — which gave way to the splendidly sardonic motto of the stagnation years: "We pretend to work and the state pretends to pay us".

Work-shy Russians are chequered throughout Chekhov's tales and in *The Fiancée*, he deepens the irony in the figure of the shiftless Andrei who pines his country for having citizens as lazy as himself. "I never do a thing. I just can't. Why do I feel so edgy when I see a lawyer, a Latin teacher or a local councillor? ... My dear, long-suffering native land, there are so many like me that you have to tolerate."

Things may be changing. A St Petersburg television station now has slots informing people how to fill in application forms (a new arrival in most Russian enterprises). The American entrepreneur Mark MacCormack, with his tiresome recipes on how to work harder, longer and better than your competitor, has also arrived (booked) on Russian bookshelves.

## Yeltsin announcement of nuclear deal astounds US

FROM CATHERINE SAMPSON IN PEKING

PRESIDENT Yeltsin said in Peking yesterday that next month he and President Bush would sign the Start II treaty to cut strategic nuclear weapons by two-thirds.

He made his disclosure unexpectedly, diverting from the text of a prepared speech to 300 Chinese intellectuals who had gathered at the state guest house, Diaoyutai, expecting to hear a lecture on the history of Sino-Russian friendship.

"I can say that an agreement is prepared on Start II on global cuts in strategic weapons by two-thirds between the United States and Russia," he told his bemused audience, "and it can be signed by January next year." Later, he told a press conference that he expected the signing to take place in Alaska. Yuri Petrov, an aide to Mr Yeltsin, said the signing had been set for January 4.

Details of specific arms deals, but made clear that he had no inhibitions about such things. "We are prepared to co-operate in all sectors," he said in comments that are likely to make Washington quake, "including the most sophisticated weapons and armaments ... We would like to build our relations on a sound commercial basis. China is one of the most financially solvent countries ... we will be able to provide China with the best technology and equipment."

Peking has already ordered 24 Su-27 fighter jets and is believed to be negotiating for MIG-31s. Last month, there were unconfirmed reports from Moscow that Russia intended to pay off \$500 million of its \$1.07 billion debt to China in the form of military hardware. Such reports have alarmed Asian countries, which worry about the prospect of an expansionist China, as well as Washington, which fears Peking will re-export high-tech weaponry.

Under the accords, Moscow will provide \$2.5 billion credit to Peking for Russia to build a nuclear power plant in the Chinese city of Liaoning. The credit will be repaid in barter trade and hard currency. China will provide 300 million yuan (\$33 million) in credit for food purchasing.

President Yeltsin said that China and Russia signed 24 agreements yesterday, a figure which, he said, should be published in *The Guinness Book of Records*. Perhaps the most important agreement is a memorandum on military co-operation, which Mr Yeltsin emphasised had been signed at the insistence of Li Peng, the Chinese prime minister. President Yeltsin gave no

details of specific arms deals, but made clear that he had no inhibitions about such things. "We are prepared to co-operate in all sectors," he said in comments that are likely to make Washington quake, "including the most sophisticated weapons and armaments ... We would like to build our relations on a sound commercial basis. China is one of the most financially solvent countries ... we will be able to provide China with the best technology and equipment."

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# Israelis hail Rabin but Arabs vow new round of violence

The deportation of Arabs has brought condemnation from abroad. It could also mark the end of the Middle East peace process

FROM BEN LYNFIELD IN JERUSALEM AND CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN CAIRO

YITZHAK Rabin's government was riding on a wave of popularity at home yesterday after its mass expulsion of alleged Muslim hardliners that drew sharp criticism from abroad.

Palestinians in the occupied territories reacted with anger and calls for heightened confrontation with security forces after the 418 suspected members of the Hamas Islamic resistance movement and the Islamic Jihad organisation were sent into exile at the edge of Israel's "security zone" in south Lebanon.

Arab moderates were under mounting pressure to pull out of the fragile Middle East peace process in response to the deportations, the biggest such expulsion of Arabs since the 1967 war. The Palestinians have already pledged to boycott the 14-month-old peace process until the deportees are returned to their homes, a move which Israeli officials say will not be made because of overwhelming Is-



raeli Jewish support for the government's action. A senior Palestine Liberation Organisation official confirmed in Tunis that Palestinian participation in the talks, the next round of which is not expected until February, was suspended "until the international community commits Israel to respect international law".

Yassir Abed-Rabbo, a member of the PLO's executive committee, said that representatives of Arab participants in the talks in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, the Palestinians and Egypt — would meet in Cairo within days to take a stand. "We cannot continue the negotiations under terrorism and extremism," he said.

Mr Rabin's usual critics on the right applauded the expulsions but the left-wing Meretz party, a key partner in his coalition, condemned its leaders' support for the expulsions, calling the banishment a violation of human rights and the principles of international law. A poll in the *Yediot Achronot* indicated that 91 per cent of the public supported the deportations.

As public outrage and a desire for a reprisal after the kidnapping and killing of Sergeant Major Nissim Toledano, a border policeman, by Hamas militants grew in Israel, Mr Rabin dismissed contentions that the deportees were being denied justice. "Did Nissim Toledano have a right of appeal?" he demanded.

The abduction and attacks that killed five other members of the security forces within a week exposed the government to charges of failure in securing the two things Mr Rabin promised before being elected in June: security and peace.

In the West Bank and Gaza, a leaflet issued by Hamas called on Palestinian groups to work together to combat the expulsions. Hamas vowed in the circular to "fight every Zionist living in the land of Palestine". The PLO's unified national leadership of the intifada issued a leaflet calling for "ten days of confrontation" with the army, beginning today. "The expulsions will not end violence. On the contrary they will increase despair and frustration," Assad Safawi, a PLO supporter, said.

Families of the 1,600 suspects jailed during this week's crackdown were given no word about whether their relatives were among the 418 people expelled. "Wives have been calling me and children are asking me about their fathers but we are simply at a loss," Bassem Eid, for the Israeli Betslem human rights organisation, said.

Deportees pray, page 1  
Leading article and letters, page 13



Steps to normality: Muslims facing Mecca pray yesterday at the Jama Masjid, India's most important mosque, in Delhi for the first time after Hindu fundamentalists destroyed the mosque in Ayodhya two weeks ago. The devout came to attend Friday prayers after religious violence abated and a curfew was lifted in the capital. The unrest

left 1,150 dead and an estimated 5,000 injured. The government said that it would start building a new mosque in Ayodhya within a year, but Hindu extremists threatened to knock that down as well. In a crackdown on religious hardliners, the government banned five sectarian organisations, three Hindu and two Muslim.

## US fears Saddam attack on Kurd enclave

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT Saddam Hussein has reportedly massed forces close to northern Iraq's Kurdish enclave, raising Pentagon fears that he could suddenly attack an area that has been under UN military protection since the Gulf war.

Saddam has moved several divisions within striking distance of the enclave, ABC television and *The New York Times* reported. Iraq claimed they were on exercises.

"We have no insight on Saddam's intentions," one Pentagon official was quoted as saying. "We're watching matters closely." Diplomats here expect an early Iraqi test of Bill Clinton's resolve, and believe America's preoccupation with Somalia and Bosnia could also embolden Saddam.

Five weeks before Mr Clinton's inauguration, it is already clear that foreign crises will distract the man who promised to concentrate on America's domestic problems. He used Thursday's announcement of two new appointments to address the Middle East peace talks and Bosnia, and rushed back when a reporter shouted a question about President Yeltsin as he was leaving.

Even before Thursday's expulsion of 400 Palestinians from Israel the Middle East peace talks were in effect on hold, awaiting Mr Clinton's accession. He pledged to do everything in his power to nurture the peace talks and produced a carefully balanced statement on the expulsions.

Mr Clinton's intervention last week inspired this week's US pressure on allies for tougher action against Serbia, but on Thursday he directed his remarks to the Serbian people, urging them to eject Slobodan Milosevic in tomorrow's presidential election.

Mr Clinton also threw his weight behind the beleaguered Mr Yeltsin. He told *The Wall Street Journal* yesterday America had to find new ways of convincing the Russian people that "if they stick with [reform] there is in fact a rainbow at the end of the tough road."

## Baker faces election enquiry

Washington: The American attorney-general appointed an independent prosecutor earlier this week to investigate allegations that senior Bush administration officials, including James Baker, the White House chief of staff, initiated or tried to cover up an apparently illegal search by the State Department for Bill Clinton's passport files during the presidential election (Jamie Dettmer writes).

Mr Baker and two of his top aides, Margaret Tutwiler, the White House communications director, and Janet Mullins, the White House political director, hired criminal lawyers soon after the White House was informed by the attorney general, William Barr, of the appointment of a prosecutor. The passport searches probably broke provisions of the Privacy Act.

### Pact signed

Ankara: Turkey and Hungary signed a security co-operation agreement to fight terrorism and crime. Ismet Sezgin, the Turkish interior minister, said the two countries would also work to tackle drug production and smuggling. (Reuters)

### Staff dismissed

Berlin: Two big employers, Coca-Cola and BMW, have both fired a member of staff for making Hitler salutes or anti-semitic remarks in Germany's first known sacking for the expression of right-wing attitudes, company officials said yesterday. (AFP)

### Officer arrested

Moscow: Police arrested an army officer who tried to sell 66 original decrees signed by Tsar Alexander I, a newspaper said. A potential buyer had called the Central State Archives, from where the collection was stolen in 1979, to confirm authenticity. (AP)

### Peru shooting

Lima: Gunmen killed Pedro Huillca, secretary-general of the General Confederation of Peruvian Workers. Police said it was not clear who was responsible. A march against working conditions led by the group on Thursday was broken up by police. (Reuters)

### Tax verdict

Madrid: Juan Guerra, the brother of Alfonso Guerra, the former Spanish deputy prime minister, was sentenced to a year in prison and fined \$85,000 for tax evasion. The jail sentence was suspended pending the hearing of other corruption charges.

## Socialist U-turn puts Fabius in the dock

FROM CHARLES BRENNER IN PARIS



Fabius infuriated the Socialist rank and file

AFTER two days of self-destructive manoeuvres, the governing Socialist party in France agreed yesterday to send Laurent Fabius, its leader, to stand trial with two former ministers for their role in the Aids blood scandal.

The week's tragicomic series of U-turns by the Socialists in the long-running affair was widely viewed as the final nail in the electoral coffin of the party that François Mitterrand founded and then led to power in 1981. A poll this week indicated that the disclosure that high officials had knowingly distributed HIV-

contaminated blood was the event that has most concerned the public this year (next came the rise in unemployment and then the famine in Somalia).

With parliamentary elections only three months away, Bernard Kouchner, the health and humanitarian action minister, who is not a party member, described the scandal as a "Chernobyl" for French society.

The Socialist executive acted yesterday after M Fabius, the prime minister at the time of the 1985 blood decision, reversed a move only two days earlier to extract himself from

trial. That action had infuriated the party rank and file who saw it as desertion by the captain of a sinking ship. In response, they defied the president's instructions and blocked the procedure to put Georgina Dufoux and Edmond Hervé, former health ministers, before the parliamentary tribunal.

M Mitterrand and his government had called on the party to accept the opposition's call for a trial as a way of clearing the air and defusing the charges that the Socialists were evading responsibility. The Socialist's initial refusal to

go ahead with the trial amounted to a suicidal act, given the degree to which public opinion is inflamed over what is seen as the evasion of ministerial responsibility in the Mitterrand administration. It was also a symptom of the feeling among many Socialists that M Mitterrand and his government have let them down.

The centre-left *Libération* said: "Their party resembles Windsor Castle after the fire and, like Charles and Diana, they are splitting up." *Le Monde* noted that M Fabius, who is 46, had switched back to volunteering for trial only after Socialist barons had persuaded him that the survival of the party, and his career, were at stake.

Offering to submit to justice, M Fabius called for the National Assembly to vote on the ministerial impeachment before the end of the parliamentary session tomorrow, but it seemed likely that no vote would be taken until well into the new year. Even if all the procedural hurdles are cleared and the so-called high court is convened for the first time in modern French history, no trial is likely to take place until after the March elections. Polls indicate that the Gaullist and centre-right parties are heading for a big victory.

Fresh woes were piled on to the Socialists yesterday when a Breton judge indicted Antoine Dufoux, husband of the former minister, for fraud in connection with the financing of her parliamentary election campaign in 1988. There was one item of good news for the party, however. Another judge dropped fraud charges against Bernard Tapie, the Socialist entrepreneur who served briefly as the urban affairs minister.

## MEPs squabble over spoils of office

FROM GEORGE BROCK IN BRUSSELS

John Major blandly told members of the European parliament this week that "we have solved the main problems confronting the Community". The members of parliament beg to differ. They are quarrelling as viciously as ever over where they should live and work.

The fiercest arguments at the Edinburgh summit were not over the subtleties of the Danish question or the arithmetic of "cohesion", but over the EC's ludicrous 30-year game of Monopoly played with the glass palaces in which its Eurocrats, ministers and MEPs wrangle, waffle and write. Should Frankfurt, Luxembourg, Amsterdam or London house a European central bank — if such a thing ever comes into existence? Who wins the European plant breeders' rights centre, or the Commu-

nity's infant FBI called "Europol"?

Some Community prime ministers may snore while their colleagues drone on about subsidiarity, but every single one snapped awake when Mr Major broached the delicate topic of carving up the spoils from nine European institutions long paralysed by the French refusal to give up the parliament's base in Strasbourg.

In the end, Mr Major won a small battle that will worsen the long-running war between Brussels, where MEPs do most of their work, and Strasbourg where, accompanied by 1,000 metal boxes of paperwork and 1,400 staff, parliamentarians move once a month. The summit merely agreed to split the parliament between three cities. "Plenary" sessions will continue in Stras-

bourg; committee meetings will stay in Brussels; and a large chunk of the staff, not to mention the MEPs' library, sits in Luxembourg.

A compromise designed to please everyone has only unleashed the latest round of an ever-more expensive auction for the loyalty of the MEPs and the lobbyists, reporters and diplomats who trail round the motorways of Western Europe trying to keep up with them.

The MEPs are furious that they were not allowed to settle their own fate and are threatening to take the summiters to court. The cities of Brussels and Strasbourg are plunging into a billion-pound race to build ever more luxurious quarters for the tribes of the peoples of Europe.

The burghers of Brussels

have the edge. Next month, small but significant ceremonies will take place in both the Belgian and Alsatian capitals. An "opening ceremony" will be performed at the gigantic Espace Leopold complex rising out of the mud near the jumble of buildings that houses the EC's institutions in Brussels, although the offices will not operate until next summer. Over in Strasbourg, a contract will be signed for an equally vast new stately pleasure dome due to open for business in the mid-1990s. The total cost of both projects, mostly met by the cities, comes to more than £1 billion.

□ Bonn: The upper house of the German parliament approved the Maastricht treaty yesterday, completing Bonn's ratification process. (Reuters)

## CAN YOU HELP THE REFUGEES THIS CHRISTMAS?



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T19/12/92



Put out more mistletoe and prepare to worship the sun, it is time for Christmas to return to its pagan roots, writes Ian Bradley

## O come all ye heathens

Should Christians give up celebrating Christmas and hand it back to devotees of paganism and New Age religion? That may seem a strange proposal to make on the eve of what is the church's busiest time of the year. Yet celebrations at Stonehenge would in many ways provide a more authentic witness to the origins of the festive season than cathedral carol services.

It is bad enough to discover that Christmas cards and trees were Victorian inventions. What is much more unsettling is the fact that Christmas itself was an invention of the fourth-century Roman church, a deliberate ecclesiastical takeover of long-standing pagan rites.

There is, of course, no biblical warrant for celebrating Jesus' birth on December 25. The Gospels give no clue to the time of year in which the Nativity took place and the early church does not seem to have had any interest in celebrating this event anyway. In so far as it had any special day in the year that was Easter Sunday when Christ's resurrection was celebrated.

It was not until more than 300

years after the death of Jesus that Christians started celebrating Christmas. The earliest recorded celebration of the birth of Jesus on December 25 seems to have taken place in Rome in the year 336, towards the end of the reign of Constantine, the first Christian Roman emperor. The choice of this particular day by the ecclesiastical authorities was almost certainly made to hijack the highly popular pagan festivals which fell at the end of the year. It was part of a deliberate and extremely successful policy by which the customs and traditions of the ancient world were appropriated by the newly fashionable and, since Constantine's conversion, politically correct religion of Christianity.

December 25 had been the *dies natalis invicti*, the day on which the Romans, in common with many other peoples in the ancient world, marked the birthday of the

unconquered sun, rising again after the darkness of winter. There is considerable evidence of an intermingling of the worship of Jesus, the Son of God, and the cult of the unconquered sun god, not least in the behaviour of Constantine himself. He seems to have hedged his bets by having both the image of Christ and the face of the sun depicted on his coins and proclaiming Sunday as a day of rest throughout the empire to please both Christians and pagan sun worshippers.

By establishing his new feast day at the end of December the church also neatly stole the limelight from two other pagan rites, the saturnalia which ran from December 17 to 23 and the kalends celebrated on new year's day. Elements of both these highly convivial festivals were to be incorporated into the Christian festive season, perhaps as pagans got their own back on

Christian attempts to muscle in on their fun. It is not difficult to see the origins of the office party in the saturnalia, a sustained period of drinking and carousing which was particularly marked by the unusual mingling of different classes of society in common jollity.

A description of the festival of the kalends by a fourth-century Greek sophist seems an even more direct anticipation of later Christmas festivities: "Everywhere may be seen carousals and well-laden tables: luxurious abundance is found in the houses of the rich, but also in the house of the poor better food than usual is put on the table. The impulse to spend seizes everyone. He who the whole year through has taken pleasure in saving and piling up his pence becomes suddenly extravagant. People are not only generous towards themselves but also to-

wards their fellow men. A stream of presents pours itself out on all sides."

During the fifth century the celebration of Christmas spread from the Roman to the Eastern church which had hitherto chosen to mark Jesus' birth along with his baptism on January 6, a date associated with older heathen rites. The Jerusalem church held out against celebrating Christmas until the seventh century and the Armenian church still celebrates both the Nativity and Epiphany of Christ in January. Western Christendom, by contrast, gradually extended its Christmas celebrations to incorporate more and more of the period covered by the pagan winter festivals. In 567 the Council of Tours gave official sanction to the 12 days of Christmas by declaring December 25 to January 6 a festive tide.

Christian England took enthusiastically to the new festival. Christmas day 598 witnessed the baptism of more than ten thousand converts to the faith at the hands of St Augustine who had been specifically directed by Pope Gregory the Great to Christianise the principal pagan festivals of the British. Apart from a brief interlude in the mid-17th century when Oliver Cromwell prohibited plum pudding and other features of the festive season, the English churches have continued to take a benign view of Christmas and stress its essentially Christian character. Their corporate advertising campaign for this year's festive season opens with the slogan: "Christmas is enough to bring anyone to their knees" and enjoins us to "Remember what it's all about and come to church this Christmas."

Presbyterian Scotland, however, has always been much more wary of a festival which retains so many features of its pagan origins. It is

only in the last 50 years or so that watchnight services and Christmas day worship has become commonplace in the Church of Scotland, while the Free Church of Scotland and other smaller Presbyterian denominations still largely refuse to acknowledge as Christian a festival so associated with over-indulgence and pagan symbols like yule logs, mistletoe and holly.

They have the evidence of history on their side — and given the ever-increasing obsolescence paid at this season to the twin gods of greed and gluttony — perhaps a certain moral point as well. Yet, however strong the secular and commercial forces that now surround it, the church as a whole does not look like surrendering Christmas back to the pagans — and why should it? The Devil has enough good tunes without handing him all the carols on a plate.

The author teaches church history at the University of Aberdeen. His book, *The Celtic Way: an exploration of Celtic Christianity in Britain*, is published by Darton, Longman and Todd next month.

## The pipsqueaks and Pavarotti

Richard Morrison attacks a mob who tried to silence a great tenor

In contact with the arts inevitably the civilising influence that the arts lobby, swarming after the anticipated profits of a national lottery, claims? The disgraceful Pavarotti business at La Scala, Milan last week suggests the opposite. The audience's booing had little to do with how well or badly Pavarotti sang his top notes, and everything to do with a pre-arranged determination to wreck a performance in the most embarrassing way possible. Good-humoured partisanship has always been an ingredient of operatic life, of course: the "Callas versus Tebaldi" argument was rehearsed in every box-office queue for years. And it has long been accepted that intense rivalry is built into the fabric of modern musical life: record companies and rival agencies fight like wildcats over prized stars. The viciousness in Milan, however, was more sinister. It reflects the moral bankruptcy of Italian artistic life, and the corruption now rife within the opera houses. Put bluntly, if a guest star at La Scala does not hand over the requisite "sweeteners" to sinister-looking agents prior to the performance, those agents find themselves unable to assure the singer that the audience will love every minute, and the predicted catastrophe swiftly follows. Television La Scala's first nights has only increased the bearpit atmosphere.

That is bad enough. Even more worrying is the way that some newspaper critics have seized on the incident as a means of attacking Pavarotti. Consider the London *Evening Standard*, which this week printed a long attack by its opera critic, one Alexander Waugh, suggesting that "Pavarotti's blunders are the first signs of a sudden and rapid end to his career." In the course of this essay, Mr Waugh even attacked Pavarotti's knees: "His legs are now so bad that it is not just running, but walking, which is causing him problems. In *Tosca* at the Royal Opera House two months ago he did not move more than about 12 feet during the whole performance... and at Cavaradossi's death scene when he is shot by a firing squad, he had to slump against a banister first and let himself down carefully."

Opera fans are usually generous in overlooking the ravages time has wrought on favourites

All very damning. But can this be the same Mr Waugh who, back in September, reviewed Pavarotti in that same *Tosca* performance with these glowing words? "At the moment he is on spectacularly fine form... and even his legs don't appear to be giving him trouble anymore. When, at the end, he is shot by a firing squad, he manages an impressive tumble."

Mr Waugh's remarkable revision of the *actualities* is far from unique. Critics who have never forgiven Pavarotti for his populist triumphs in the Caracalla Baths or at Hyde Park have lined up to write him off. From some of the reporting, you might have thought that this great tenor, after a 35-year career of glittering distinction, was some passing piece of ephemera from the college grunge-rock circuit.

Perhaps some artists bring all this on themselves. For when performers in the "serious arts" decide to chase mass popularity, as Pavarotti or Nigel Kennedy (or, before them, James Galway) have done, they inevitably have to play the game by the mass media's rules. Popular

newspapers love larger-than-life heroes: that is why they latched on to Pavarotti in the first place. But they are also addicted to novelty. Former heroes must regularly be vilified and consigned to obscurity to make way for new ones. The irony in Pavarotti's case is that there are no new tenors around with an ounce of his star quality.

He may well be in the evening of his career. But famous singers are notoriously reluctant to say adieu to their public — and doing opera fans are usually generous about overlooking the ravages that time has wrought on their favourites. Pavarotti, however, will never be granted that courtesy. One cracked top B, and every headline will gleefully proclaim "He's finished!"

I do not know whether this unsavoury business counts as "culture". But if this is the sign of a mature civilisation, then bring back cave painting. And the next time a smooth-talking arts lobbyist asks you to gamble away a few quid every week on a lottery because it will make Britain a more civilised place, ask him if he has ever been to a first night at La Scala.

## Restoring a capital city

Western aid would be well spent helping to restore the crumbling buildings of Moscow

Moscowites have a fantasy. Somehow, from somewhere, their city will rise again from the ashes of communism and be what it was under the Tsars, one of the great metropolises of Europe. They gaze at travel advertisements. They watch before-and-after newscasts of post-war German cities. They recall Tolstoy's Moscow after Napoleon's retreat. Though the anti-hill is destroyed, the anti-speed about the scattered hill, dragging rubbish and corpses... something remains, something intangible, something that is the real Moscow.

Communism is supposed to have gone. Moscowites wait and they wait. Their city in December looks its worst, dark and freezing. High in the Supreme Soviet the boys still plot against the tsar, against Boris the Hesitant. In the streets beneath, huddled millions bend their heads against the sleet, shuffling past street vendors deep in frozen mud. Buildings stand dark and decrepit. More seem to be

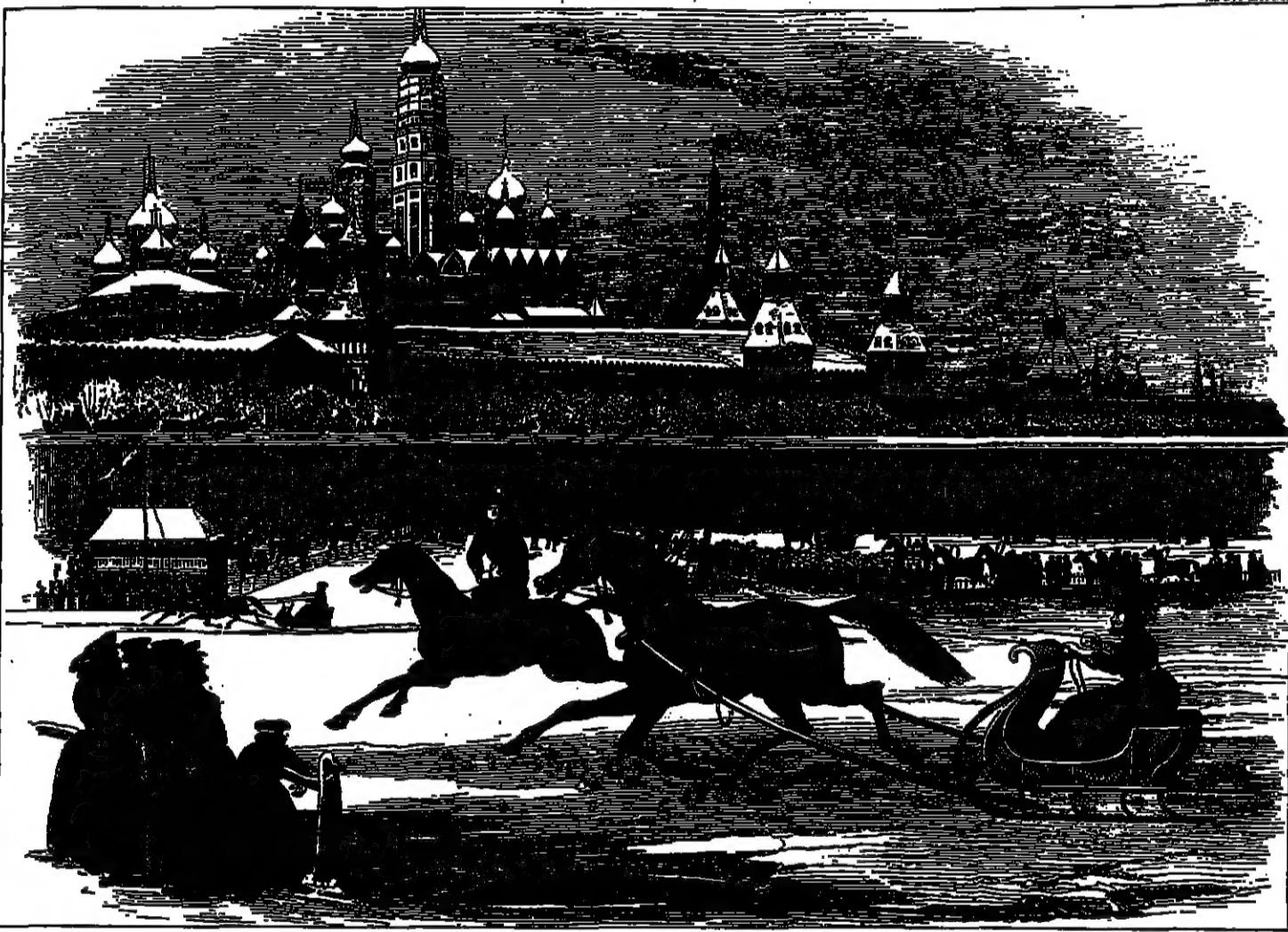
ruined each time I come, victims left unburied on the long retreat from capitalism.

The recent arrival of "Western investment" has made Moscow's streets seem even more obscene. The Benetton and Dior shining out of the gloom of Gum, the Kempniskis and the Savoy, may be oases for the rich. To most Moscowites, the "dollars only" sign on the doors adds humiliation to defeat. Nowhere have I seen private affluence and public squalour so garishly in contrast.

Britain is pouring \$1 billion of aid into Russia over three years. Most of it is going on credits, food and financial advice. I hope the Public Accounts Committee is getting value for money. How much is going on black markets, fuelling inflation and fees to British bankers? Could it not do more good, generate more jobs, be received with more gratitude, perhaps even be more profitable, if it were spent on helping restore Moscow? (Some of the aid, a tiny amount, is to help private and restore 13 old buildings in St Petersburg; no such deal exists in Moscow.)

I am convinced that pride in the capital city is an important component of national revival: beautifying streets, monuments and public buildings, reviving craftsmanship, encouraging tourism. Most visitors see Moscow as just the Kremlin, admittedly the most spectacular architectural set piece in Europe.

But for the rest of Moscow, tourists remember only the horrors



Moscow in 1850: then the magnificent 19th-century capital of an empire, today it is ramshackle, run down and bleak

the Sadovaya ring demolished and stripped by Stalin so war planes could land; the grim Kalinin Prospekt, an avenue of glass boxes driven through the old Arbat district (the GLC wanted the same for Covent Garden, the City got the same for London Wall); the Rossiya Hotel looming over a cluster of ancient churches; the mile upon mile of "Khrushchev boxes", cheap housing thrown up without thought of community; the dreary street furniture, the lack of charm in public spaces, the bleak greyness of it all. This Moscow is the nightmare realisation of the modern movement's future city.

But look deeper and a Cinderella Moscow can be found lurking behind the hoardings, the concrete forecourts, the neon lights. The cornices and peeling stucco of Alexander's "Regency" rebuilding of 1812-16 are still there, as are many of the palaces and mansions, churches and monasteries. Much of Alexander's Boulevard ring survives, graceful terraces not unlike those built by Nash and Cubitt in London. There is still something saved of the old Arbat. What is the

Chelsea of the future, the old Zamoskvorechye quarter south of the river, patiently awaits first aid and reorganisation.

The churches are not faring badly. Of the 500 inherited by the communists, 260 survive and 150 are already back in use. (The reopening of churches was Tolstoy's first sign of returning Moscow life.) The demolished 1636 Kazan Cathedral on the corner of Red Square is even being rebuilt, as has been the great Danilov Monastery, formerly a prison. But palaces, universities, mansions sit gloomy and silent, awaiting somebody's love and money. There cannot be a capital city in the world with fewer cranes, a city in which less is actually being built.

Can Britain, or the Council of Europe, not offer to restore the lovely old Pashkov House across from the Kremlin, or Gilliard's neighbouring university building? We are paying to decommission Russia's nuclear weapons. Why not pay to decommission the Rossiya and Intourist monstrosities, surely

soon to be obsolete? But the greatest boon to Moscow would be to help restore its street architecture, development that took Moscow from the fortress of medieval autocracy to become the fastest growing and most exciting city in Europe. This can only be done by buying and paying to restore private houses or small offices.

The chief obstacle still lies in Moscow's lack of faith in its architectural glory (unlike St Petersburg). It has not found the means to sell or give state property to the private sector, or at least do so without the uncertainty of huge corruption. Property law is still hopelessly primitive.

The anti-hill activity that Tolstoy described among the 1812 Moscowites derived from citizens returning to "their" houses. They may have found them looted and burnt. They may have had to pillage in return. But they were undaunted. The streets teemed with builders, furnishers, carters, food vendors. Alexander's commission could rely on this enterprise and took just four years to plan the boulevard ring and see three quarters of the city's

stone houses repaired. This was phenomenal energy.

Torn asunder by Stalin and Khrushchev, impoverished and demoralised, Moscow has lost the art of domestic private enterprise. I wonder whether it is yet able to make use of bankers clocking up fees in the Metropole Hotel, or extravagant foreign shops. What it does need is the catalyst of every booming city, immigrants who want to live there because they find it beautiful, who have money to spend on craftsmen and materials, who will demand quality, get value and set standards.

I would bet the British Treasury could do more good for Moscow by acquiring and restoring the old streets directly behind its own embassy than by pouring credits into dud factories. How marvellous if in years to come Britain could point to "Moscow in Peril" — like Venice in Peril — to restore churches, the old university, conserved facades along the Boulevard ring and in Zamoskvorechye, point and say, "We did that." For \$1 billion, you could help a lot of Moscow.

## Colour of the chameleon

DID SHE or didn't she? The mystery surrounding the existence of the alleged love letters between Dame Daphne du Maurier and Gertrude Lawrence is becoming as intriguing as anything the author ever wrote.

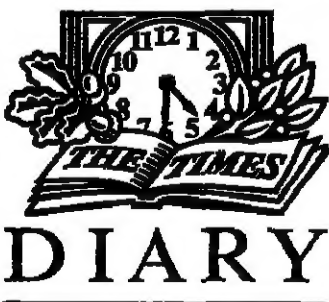
Following a letter in yesterday's *Times* from Margaret Forster, du Maurier's biographer, disclaiming any knowledge of the scandalous letters, comes news that Oriel Malet, a writer and friend of du Maurier's, is planning to publish her own letters from the author of *Rebecca* and *Jamaica Inn*. Malet received around 260 epistles during the course of their friendship. But before she is besieged by agents offering her vast sums, it must be pointed out that Malet has no knowledge of any lesbian affair.

Her letters from du Maurier concern the author's writings, family and friends. Malet is sceptical about the existence of the lesbian letters. Speaking from her home in Normandy she says: "I don't believe these letters exist at all." Malet saw both du Maurier and Lawrence together in New York after a performance of *The King and I*. "We went backstage," says Malet. "Poor Gertie was ill at that

time but I detected nothing intimate between them. It was just two ladies taking tea together. "I think it is appalling that people can write anything they like about famous people once they are dead. I know Gertrude Lawrence's family wanted to sue but then realised they couldn't under British law."

Malet, who stays in touch with both of du Maurier's daughters, says one of the reasons she decided to publish her book *Letters from Menability* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, due out in May) is to counter the image of du Maurier put across by Marilyn Shallos in his book *The Private Life of Daphne du Maurier*.

Shallos, who first hinted at the darker side of du Maurier, is unrepentant. He plans to republish his book in March with an extra chapter of more explicit material. He maintains the love letters, which he says number over 400, are in the hands of an anonymous friend of Dame Daphne's. Shallos believes they will eventually be published and in the meantime is planning another book tentatively entitled *Daphne and Gertie*.



"Daphne was not a romantic novelist. She was a complicated chameleon like figure," says Shallos. Malet, to some extent, agrees. "She was not at all judgmental," she says. "If you went to her and said you had just committed a murder she would be the first to help." Yet another reason for her feuding biographers to mourn her passing.

### Witty in the City

NORMAN LAMONT may be short of Christmas cheer, but there was little sign of it this week when he attended the seasonal bash at the London Stock Exchange before heading off to host his own personal drinks party at Number 11. Although the Downing Street affair was a little more subdued than normal, the Chancellor was at his pith-

iest among the assembled dignitaries from the City.

"How many Thursdays assistants does it take to change a light bulb?" asked Lamont. "Two — but make sure you get a receipt." But while he has arguably maintained his humour, Lamont's second offering confirmed that 1992 has left its mark. "You know that 1792 was also a turbulent year. Britain introduced the libel act and France built its first guillotine. I can now see the merits of the French approach." So can others, but not just for the fourth estate.

### Sell-off smiles

The auction catalogue for the sale of contents from Headington Hall, Robert Maxwell's less than elegant mansion in Oxford, was printed yesterday by Nuffield Press — formerly owned by none other than, of course, Robert Maxwell.

The company has produced thousands of copies of Sobel's catalogue prior to the £500,000 auction in London next month. The tycoon owned Nuffield from 1986 until a management buyout, after his death, secured a fully independent future. The company is now flourishing, according to Richard Holmes, the managing director. "I like the irony of being able to print the catalogue. It is very satisfy-



### A palatable restoration

"The artist never dies," according to Longfellow but he is in a sorry state if he loses his palette, as J.M.W. Turner can testify. The statue of the Victorian painter near his tomb in St Paul's Cathedral was vandalised in the 1880s when its wooden palette and brush was stolen. It has now been restored to mark the 141st anniversary of his death and there will be a service in St Paul's today when Louise Turner, the painter's great-great-granddaughter, will lay a wreath.

In a way, we have had the last laugh," he says. Well in a way — Nuffield, like many Maxwell companies, had its pension funds fully loaded with certain members of the hundred staff losing up to £40,000 as a result.

### In white satin

LOCALS in the Peak district should not be over anxious if they chance upon a group of eight rather fearsome men clad in yellow and

white satin dress, brandishing ugly knives. For improbable as it may be, the eight are traditionally-costumed Himalayan sherpas on a sort of busman's holiday — a six month walking tour of Britain's hills and dales.

The walkabout by the mountain men has not been without incident thus far. They recently flew into Gatwick airport and, by nightfall, had walked as far as Petersham in Surrey where they asked for permission to set up camp for two

nights in the meadows. David Hastings, manager of Petersham Farm, immediately granted the sherpas a small patch of land. But, as they were setting up their tents a number of the sherpas were upbraided by members of the Richmond constabulary.

"The police were suspicious and thought they were illegal immigrants," says Hastings. "In fact, although they look very fierce with long beards, they are very pleasant. My wife and I spent an amusing evening with them in their tents."

The Richmond police appear to have little recollection of the matter. "We did stop some men in a transit van but I'm not sure they were wearing tribal dress," says Chief Inspector Ashley Phillips.







## NO-MAN'S LAND

Israel's prime minister is struggling in a quagmire

The dilemma facing Yitzhak Rabin over the deportation of 400 suspected terrorists to Lebanon is the dilemma that has faced the state of Israel since its fiery birth: how to reconcile international pressures with domestic imperatives. The United Nations, White House and British EC presidency have all condemned the expulsion. Yet opinion polls suggest that Mr Rabin's action is supported by 90 per cent of the Israeli electorate, appalled by the cold-blooded murder of a border guard by Hamas gunmen earlier this week.

Israel has long argued that its occasional deportation of Palestinians since 1967 has not breached the Geneva Convention prohibiting "forcible transfer as well as deportation of protected persons from occupied territories". On this occasion, the authorities protest that the banishment is only temporary, an emergency action in response to atrocities, rather than a formal deportation. This does not justify the evasion of the standard appeals procedure to get the deportees out quickly, or the unpleasant manner in which they were transported to southern Lebanon, bound and blindfolded.

The angry juridical debate over international law will continue, fuelled by the symbolic violence at the border yesterday. Politically, there is no question that the Middle East peace process has been dealt a grievous blow by Israel's sharp retaliation. Mr Rabin's acceptance of the land-for-peace formula was a milestone in the history of the region, on a par with President Sadat's ground-breaking visit to Jerusalem. The seventh round of Arab-Israeli talks in October ended with agreement between Israel and Jordan on a basic framework for peace. But these hard-won gains may now

evaporate — as the fundamentalist leaders of Hamas have intended all along.

Precisely because he is a moderate with a sincere desire for peace, Mr Rabin, who controls only 62 of the Knesset's 120 seats, cannot afford to be seen as a soft touch. Like most Israelis, he wishes his motherland to be judged by, and achieve, the standards of a Western democracy. At the same time, he rightly perceives in the continued existence of Hamas a threat to long-term negotiation and to any semblance of order in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Led from prison by Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, this five-year-old militant movement was foolishly cultivated by Yitzhak Shamir to undermine the PLO's influence and is now striving to replace it as the voice of Palestinian anger. Hamas offers its constituency an uncompromising blend of fundamentalism and unreconstructed terrorist tactics. Its immediate response to the mass deportation was to promise attacks on civilians. The Israeli prime minister's diagnosis — that the movement must be defeated as a matter of urgency — is essentially correct.

Yet his chosen method leaves much to be desired. Mr Rabin has ruled out trial by due process for these terrorist suspects, clearly the West's preferred strategy, as too cumbersome a response. But, by attempting a mass deportation, he finds himself in the even deeper quagmire of international law.

Internment, though unpleasant, would have been a far more efficient weapon and one for which numerous precedents exist in countries that have battled against terrorism. Like the deportees themselves, Mr Rabin now finds himself in his own unenviable no-man's land.

## BLOCKED CHANNELS

Channel 5 is another failure for broadcasting policy

Yet again the government's reform of commercial broadcasting has descended into unseemly chaos. First there was the award of ITV franchises, which more resembled a bingo game than a finely judged auction. Then yesterday the Independent Television Commission refused to grant a licence to the only bidder for the new Channel 5 because it thought the consortium might be unable to maintain its proposed service for the required ten years.

Channel 5 Holdings had solid backing from Thames TV (with its parent, Thomson EM) and Time Warner Entertainment, which between them had guaranteed 45 per cent of the funding. The remaining 55 per cent, conditional on the consortium winning the licence, was to come from Time Warner Inc., Pearson, Associated Newspapers and others. The ITC said it was not satisfied with these pledges. It also refused to give the consortium a 12-week grace period in which to prove the money was in place.

The decision was bizarre: after all, radio stations such as Classic FM were granted a grace period. By rejecting the bid, the ITC has merely ensured that viewers will not have their choice extended at all. Had the bid been accepted, there might have been a risk of the station collapsing or being taken over, but at least new programmes would have reached the screens in the meantime. Some choice must be better than none at all.

The Thames consortium was offering something quite different from what is already on air. Much of its output was going

to be truly local, run from city stations starting in London and then Manchester. National broadcasting is the norm in Britain; what is missing is the small-scale regional and local television that has been such a success in North America.

The Broadcasting Act was never a good law, but it looks increasingly flawed as its provisions come into force. The act could have stipulated that Channel 5 be made up of local, city stations, but it did not. As the new ITV franchises prepare to go on air in two weeks' time, the promised output is looking threadbare from the start.

It was hard enough to get a quality threshold inserted into the act at all: Baroness Thatcher did not want one. But already it is clear that many of the grand programming promises made by bidders at the auction will not be delivered. And the ITC can do little to punish them.

In the old days, ITV companies were desperate to impress the ITC's predecessor, the IBA, by producing high-quality programmes. Much great television was made in order to ensure that the company's franchise was renewed. Now there is no such incentive. However good an ITV's company's programmes, it can still be outbid at the next auction. Had the auction been determined on a better mix of quality and price, good programmes would have been protected.

The end result of the Broadcasting Act is that the Treasury is a paltry £250 million the richer, British television, and its 55 million viewers, are vastly the poorer.

## ON BUYING PRESENTS

Christmas Past: a series on the unchanging face of the season. The first is from *The Times* of 19 December, 1928

The Christmas shopping season is approaching its grand climactic There are other shopping seasons. Spring, Summer and Autumn, and the interstices can be filled in with sales. But the Christmas season stands clearly marked off from all the rest as the one when people are buying to give. If they push a little harder and grab a little quicker, their fellow-shoppers know that they are striving not simply for themselves alone but for relations and even for friends.

Nor is this the only reason for receiving jabs with good humour. Exercise is a problem for many town dwellers and those to whom physical exercises in the bedroom or bathroom in the early morning are inexpressibly depressing will learn, if they do not already know, that there is no finer exercise in London, and certainly none cheaper, than point-to-point scrambles through a large store at this season. Not every one in the crowds is a buyer; some are only there in training to offer their coming feasts at the Christmas table.

Every year the injunction to shop early is disregarded, and disregarded for a profound and humane reason. The gift that has cost the giver a real effort is the gift worth receiving, and many a homely tie or laconic calendar would be doubly valued if it bore the date and place of purchase to show that it had been bought with effort and not ordered in the coward's fashion through the post.

Often, it must be admitted, the struggle is worth more than the prize, for this is the season when shopkeepers make their boldest experiments and produce their strangest objects. There is nothing that people will not buy if it is for somebody else. In the orgy of buying there is nothing that does not stand a chance of being bought and presented by some giver who has running in his head a confused memory of the precept that one

should give till it hurts. The modern scientists are at one with the medieval philosophies in teaching that nothing is ever totally destroyed. There are Christmas presents going the rounds which make this a depressing thought.

It is a difficulty for traders that, just when industry is organized to supply objects of all kinds in great numbers quickly, aesthetic fashions and difficulties about service should favour a small house with very little in it. Only Victorian houses can cope with the many gifts which the shopmen are determined shall be bought. There are tidy housewives, givers themselves, who say that they do not mind strange objects coming into the house and welcome their husbands' friends but who hate a mess. For them the Christmas presents are at their worst when they strip in public and, slipping string and paper, "make a liner and call it Christmas".

It is undoubtedly true that Christmas and the plan of making everybody give every one else a present is good for trade. Far more is bought this way than would be bought if people got what they wanted for themselves instead of getting what their relations think they ought to like or find it amusing to give them. There are Christmas presents which began as Christmas presents and can never hope to be anything else. They pass hurriedly and furtively from hand to hand like the slipper in hunt the slipper or the donkey in the shorter card game of that name.

These gifts would never have taken their first difficult step into human society but for the warm and sanguine view, of things as of people, which the Christmas season encourages every one to take. The note of strangeness which they bring into life enhances the richness of experience and the question of their ultimate disposal sharpens the wits which good living might else make dull.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 071-782 5000

### Patients' role in the press campaign to save Bart's

From Professor G. M. Besser, Chief Executive of the Bart's NHS Trust

Sir, Simon Jenkins ("Suffer the little children", December 16) challenges St Bartholomew's to fight its corner with rational arguments. In response to overwhelming demand from our supporters, Bart's has produced a briefing document setting out our critique of the Tomlinson report and our radical strategy for taking the hospital into the 21st century.

This document contains no photographs or quotes from patients. It consists of reasoned argument and statistics, demonstrating why we believe the Bart's plan will achieve the necessary rationalisation without the huge damage and costs inherent in implementing Tomlinson's proposal.

Mr Jenkins is right to raise the issue of how Tomlinson ties in with the internal market. Tomlinson's analysis assumes each hospital is a total monopoly, owning exclusive rights to treat patients within a given catchment area. The internal market was intended to be about rewarding hospitals such as Bart's which attract increasing numbers of patients and which (as demonstrated by recent figures from our regional health authority) can demonstrate a level of efficiency that is unrivalled in north-east London.

Part of the media are clearly more concerned with human interest stories than our facts and figures. The Bart's Patients Campaign — run exclusively by patients — has been happy to co-operate with the media. I would not criticise them for that. The patient's charter encourages feedback from consumers. If ours is more positive than most I see that as a cause for congratulation rather than concern.

Yours faithfully,  
G. M. BESSER,  
Chief Executive,  
The Bart's NHS Trust,  
St Bartholomew's Hospital,  
West Smithfield, EC1.  
December 16.

From Lady Romney

Sir, Simon Jenkins makes assumptions which must be refuted. The

consultants at Bart's have never sought to exploit suffering children. As the mother of a child who lived, fought and died in the cancer ward, I can testify to the consultants' unerring commitment to protecting the dignity of every child in their care.

I can confirm the desperation and passion, which gave rise spontaneously to the patients' campaign, when faced with the proposed closure of the hospital.

Parents are fighting for the place that could mean the difference between life and death for their child. Surely Simon Jenkins should have the heart to understand this?

While the hospital and consultants work hard to ensure Tomlinson's proposals are debated at a higher level, nothing will stop patients — both adults and children — continuing to fight their corner with all they have at their disposal.

Yours faithfully,  
PENELOPE ROMSEY,  
Broadlands, Romsey, Hampshire.  
December 18.

From Mrs Miriam Ryan

Sir, Why does Mr Jenkins have such a problem with patients expressing their views about the possible closure of a hospital to which they happen to be deeply attached?

What is so "lucky" about a mother wanting to support the hospital that gave her the support she needed to make a difficult decision which ultimately saved the life of her baby? In his article, Mr Jenkins criticises Mrs Garmham, mother of two-and-a-half-year-old Amy, for "offering" her daughter to the *Evening Standard*.

Mrs Garmham of course did nothing of the kind: but she did describe how the devoted care and support she received from medical staff at both *Homerton* and *Smithfield* helped give her the courage to try to save one of her twin daughters, after the other had died in the womb at 20 weeks.

She is just one of thousands of patients who have come together to fight the proposed closure of Bart's, each in their own way.

The Bart's Patients Campaign was set up by patients, is funded by patients and is driven by patients, all

of whom are determined to make their voices heard. That this group includes children seems to upset Mr Jenkins. Fortunately, the rest of the press feel differently.

Yours sincerely,  
MIRIAM RYAN  
(Co-ordinator, Patients Committee, Save Bart's Campaign),  
St Bartholomew's Hospital, EC1.

From Ms Jacqui Dowding

Sir, May I, on behalf of the Bart's Patients Campaign, offer Mr Jenkins our heartfelt thanks for his adverse article. As a result of it we have received numerous telephone calls, messages and visits from people in support of our campaign. We hope he will keep up the good work.

Yours sincerely,  
JACQUIE DOWDING  
(Member, Patients Committee, Save Bart's Campaign),  
St Bartholomew's Hospital, EC1.  
December 17.

From Mr C. Douglas Woodward

Sir, Hospital consultants are not the only people fighting for Bart's. On December 3 the City's governing body, the Court of Common Council, unanimously agreed recommendations addressed to the secretary of state for health requesting the continued existence of the hospital — not just its specialities, but the general medical facilities it provides for those who live and work in the City and those who come for treatment from Hackney and Islington and much further afield.

I am not so much bothered by Bart's pulling out all the stops in its own defence as by Mrs Bottomley's quoted utterances on the subject. These give me the impression that she is determined to close Bart's regardless of the weight of public opinion against such a step.

Yours faithfully,  
C. DOUGLAS WOODWARD  
(Deputy, Ward of Cripplegate),  
Court of Common Council,  
Members' Room,  
Guildhall, EC2.  
December 17.

India. Many of these Pakistanis had been living in the UAE for over ten years.

In the last week over 700 Muslim extremists have been imprisoned without trial in Egypt (report, December 14). Why no public outcry? Why no UN condemnation?

Of course there are obvious differences with the current Israeli/Palestinian situation. Those expelled from the UAE were not trying to overthrow the government and they were not supporters of those carrying out random acts of murder. The detainees in Egypt have been carrying out random murders (including that of a British nurse recently) and maybe that is the reason why the Western world has not condemned Egypt.

Yours faithfully,  
A. M. LEHRER,  
Suite 206,  
38 Mount Pleasant, WC1.  
December 18.

### Israeli actions

From the Reverend Robin Ray

Sir, Israel removes a significant number of native inhabitants from territory it controls (report, December 18). Is this not "ethnic cleansing"?

Yours etc.,

ROBIN J. RAY,  
St Peter's Vicarage,  
62 Eastwick Road,  
Taunton, Somerset.  
December 18.

From Mr Avi Lehrer

Sir, In the past week over 500 Pakistani citizens have been expelled from the United Arab Emirates. They had been living and working there for some years. Why no public outcry? Why no United Nations condemnation? They were expelled because they took part in demonstrations concerning the Hindu/Muslim disputes in

### Settlements policy

From the Director of the Council for the Advancement of Arab-British Understanding

Sir, Mr Spencer Batiste, MP (letter, December 9), is correct to say that Mr Rabin has suspended the creation of new settlements, but he is allowing over 10,000 dwellings to be constructed at existing settlements in the territories occupied in 1967, including the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem, which he considers vital to Israeli security. This will allow a potential expansion of 50,000 settlers and, if this took place in one year, it would be the second largest increase in the settler population in any year since the occupation began.

Therefore it may seem rather academic to raise the argument of the Arab nations dropping their trade boycott as a reciprocal gesture. How-

ever, boycotts have been used by many countries when in dispute with other states. This is usually without approval by the United Nations and without legitimacy of this action being challenged by countries not party to the dispute, for example the United States boycott of Cuba.

Thus the boycott should surely be brought to an end as a final and just settlement of the Arab-Israeli dispute which gave rise to it. It is unjust to expect the Arabs to drop these measures in exchange for a limited Israeli gesture which allows illegal building to continue and illegal settlements in place.

Yours faithfully,  
BERNARD MILLS, Director,  
Council for the Advancement of Arab-British Understanding,  
The Arab-British Centre,  
21 Collingham Road, SW5.

### After Edinburgh

From Mr Anthony J. Gray

Sir, Woodrow Wyatt's vision of a headlong rush towards enlargement of the Community is on the agenda ("John Major pulls it off", December 12). However, his suggestion that this should be accompanied by a weakening of the powers of the European Parliament, confining it to a "harmless talking shop", is perverse. The EC desperately needs to strengthen the democratic legitimacy and public accountability of its institutions.

If the political will is there, a solution is at hand: I refer to the role of the Court of Auditors. The Treaty of European Union makes a specific declaration to enhance the effectiveness of the work of the Court of Auditors and this should now be a matter of priority. The need for a body of persons independent of the Commission, the Council or member state governments, specifically charged with the task of reviewing the expenditure and management of Community programmes, is well accepted.

The problem is that the Court of Auditors as an institution does not carry enough clout to ensure that its recommendations are implemented by the Commission, even in the case where a resolution has been passed by

the European Parliament calling on the Commission to do so. The Commission's high-handed approach is unhelpful.

Why cannot the role of the Court of Auditors be extended as well as strengthened, to act as an independent body charged with reviewing proposed Community legislation (in consultation with the European Parliament and national parliaments) and thus ensure an effective check against measures which contravene the principle of subsidiarity.

Yours faithfully,  
ANTHONY J. GRAY,  
5 Ranelagh Avenue, SW6.  
December 16.

From Mr Peter J. Lord-Smith

Sir, Is it not incongruous that a British prime minister should invite the heads of 11 foreign governments on two days and millions of pounds negotiating a deal to please Danish voters, whilst persistently denying British voters, to whom the whole of Europe owes its freedom, an opportunity to express their opinion.

Yours faithfully,  
PETER J. LORD-SMITH,  
Cartref, Tredington,  
Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire.

### Exploitation by industrial fishing

From the Chief Executive of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, and others

Sir, Fishermen and environmentalists alike are concerned by the industrial fisheries, which remove small forage fish, such as sand-eels, for conversion to fishmeal or oil. We want to see these fisheries phased out. The very foundation of the marine food chain is threatened. Sand-eels, sprats and other fish caught by industrial fishing are the primary food of edible fish and marine wildlife. Moreover, because small fish nets are used, there is a large incidental catch of the young of edible fish, such as cod and haddock.

Last month the European Commission published a report assessing the impact of industrial fisheries. The recommendations leave us little hope of any resolution. The report stated that the reduction in industrial fisheries would result in increases in a number of important fish stocks, and yet concluded that "the necessity for such changes appears at present not to be compelling". The potential impact on the marine food chain was not even addressed.

There is no clear solution as long as the political pressure is to maintain the status quo. The Danish have the biggest industrial fisheries, and no one wants to make EC membership less attractive to them.

The EC is failing in its responsibility to manage fisheries resources in European waters. Despite statements by the UK fisheries minister, John Gummer, that the government is opposed to industrial fishing, it has failed to take action during its presidency of the EC. The industrial fishery accounts for half of the tonnage of fish removed from Europe's seas — this is short-sighted exploitation of the bottom of the food chain, and must be phased out.

Yours faithfully,  
BARBARA YOUNG, Chief Executive,  
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds,  
RICHARD BANKS (Chief Executive),  
National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations,  
GORDON C. CLARK,  
Marine Conservation Society,  
D. J. MACKENZIE,  
Atlantic Salmon Trust,  
GEORGE MEDLEY,  
World Wide Fund for Nature,  
C. W. POUPARD,  
Salmon and Trout Association,  
TIM CORDY,  
Royal Society for Nature Conservation,  
PETER MELCHETT, Greenpeace UK,  
DAVID HUGHES HALLETT,  
Scottish Wildlife Trust,  
c/o Royal Society for the Protection of Birds,  
The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire.  
December 11.

### Destruction at sea

From Mrs Indrani Lutchman

Sir, While my sympathy goes out to the fishermen who have been blockading Lochinver harbour (report, December 10) and those who marched through Edinburgh, I should like to point out that even though numbers of fish have increased in the North Sea this year, this cannot be treated with total optimism. Scientists are still concerned about the heavy exploitation of the fish stocks.

WWF UK (World Wide Fund for Nature) fully agrees that the common fisheries policy has not achieved its aim of conserving fish. Allocation of quotas for a single species of fish is a nonsense. The North Sea supports a mixed community of fish so that the present policy has resulted in the destruction of young fish and species that have to be thrown back.

WWF UK believes the only answer is an overall reduction in the size of EC fleets and a vessel licensing scheme to reduce fishing capacity. But this must go hand in hand with a realistic financial incentive to help fishermen who will be losing their livelihoods.

Yours faithfully,  
INDRANI LUTCHMAN  
(Fisheries Officer),  
WWF UK (World Wide Fund for Nature),  
Panda House, Weyside Park,  
Catteshall Lane,  
Godalming, Surrey.  
December 11.

### Drivers who smoke

From Mr Peter Russell

Sir, Dr R. Scott Russell (letter, December 15) pleads for the pipe-smoker to be given special consideration for reductions in motoring insurance. No doubt he gained considerable solace and comfort from his briar dummy for over 50 years of driving.

But is he aware that many professional driving instructors, who teach from their own practical experience, often claim the only danger on the roads greater than the man puffing his pipe at the wheel is the man who is smoking a pipe and wearing a hat?

All too often he is a founder member of that most exclusive of motoring clubs, the Middle Lane Owners Society.

Yours faithfully,  
PETER RUSSELL,  
(General Secretary),  
Driving Instructors Association,  
Safety House,  
Beddington Farm Road,  
Croydon, Surrey.  
December 15.

Weekend Money letters, page 23

Letters should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be faxed to 071-782 5046.

















**BUSINESS 17-26**  
Interview: Lloyds Bank boss worries about the future



**CYCLING 28**  
Chris Boardman: looking for a ticket to ride



**GOLF 30**  
Nick Faldo: a man driven by pursuit of perfection

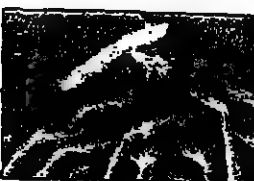
**WEEKEND SPORTING FIXTURES**  
PAGE 27

# THE TIMES 2

SATURDAY DECEMBER 19 1992

**WEEKEND MONEY**

**ABETTING AID**

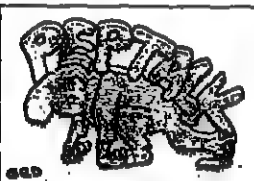


The current decline in charitable giving, while demand for aid soars, means that tax-efficient donations have become even more important  
Page 22

**VIEWS VARY**

As demand grows for a compensation fund for members of company pension schemes, opinions differ about its form  
Page 21

**CHARGED UP**



Are Peps worth it? One reader claims administration fees charged on his Pep have far outstripped dividends  
Letters, page 23

**TAKE COUNSEL**



A new debt counselling service is planned. Geeta Varma will be helping people in Leeds with money problems  
Page 23

**THE POUND**

US dollar 1.5675 (-0.0130)  
German mark 2.4531 (-0.0054)  
Exchange index 80.4 (-0.3)  
Bank of England official close (4pm)

**STOCK MARKET**

FT 30 share 2147.6 (+55.1)  
FT-SE 100 2789.7 (+49.4)  
New York Dow Jones 3288.68 (+19.45)  
Tokyo Nikkei Avge 17680.74 (+242.83)

**INTEREST RATES**

London: Bank Base, 7%  
3-month Interbank, 7.75%  
3-month eligible bills, 6.75%  
US: Prime Rate, 6%  
Federal Funds, 2.75%  
3-month Treasury Bills, 3.17-3.15%  
30-year bonds, 102.1-102.2

**CURRENCIES**

London: New York \$1.5655  
Paris 16.4508  
Swiss 2.0262  
DM 2.4531  
Yen 192.87  
Index 80.4  
ECU 1.237840  
SDR 1.28730  
London Foreign market close

**GOLD**

London Fixing: AM \$337.15 PM \$337.00  
Close \$336.90-337.30  
\$214.50-215.50  
New York: COMEX \$ 336.75-337.25

**NORTH SEA OIL**

Brent (Jan) \$18.40/bbl (\$18.50)

**RETAIL PRICES**

RPI 139.7 November (1987=100)  
\* Denotes midday trading price

## Power regulator urges greater competition

By ROSS TREMAN  
INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

THE air of crisis enveloping Britain's energy policy deepened further yesterday when the electricity industry regulator confirmed profound flaws in the operation of power markets.

Stephen Littlechild, the head of Oftec, electricity's regulatory body, said recent experience showed more competition was needed to limit the market power of National Power and PowerGen, Britain's two big generators.

His findings in a report on the operation of the electricity pricing pool add to a growing body of evidence that the structure of electricity privatisation was gravely flawed. Electricity company profits have surged ahead despite the recession, large industrial users complain high power prices are making them uncompetitive, and a rash of new plants under construction is expected to lead to a massive surplus in generating capacity.

Professor Littlechild yesterday acknowledged growing pressure to trigger a Monopolies and Mergers Commission enquiry into the electricity industry. Sir James McKinnon, the gas regulator, has already called an MMC enquiry into British Gas, with a recommendation that the company be broken up.

Oftec's chief, however, said he would hold off to study developments. But he made it plain that he would not hesitate to call an early enquiry if competition failed to develop, or customers failed to benefit from lower prices.

In his sternest critique on a growing list of adverse findings into complaints by large business customers, Professor Littlechild said the exercise of market power by the two generators had pushed up prices in the electricity pool, or

**The privatisation of the electricity industry was fatally flawed, according to the power watchdog who is calling for greater competition between the generators**

spot market. In the four months to September, prices were up 20 per cent, year on year, as a result.

There was no suggestion, he said, that the generators had colluded. However, with 43.6 per cent of the market controlled by National Power, 28.2 per cent by PowerGen, 18.7 per cent by Nuclear Electric and just 9.6 per cent by other rivals, the big generators could hardly avoid shaping the market.

The existence of a duopoly adds to the unpredictability of pool prices, he said. This had already deterred some would-be new entrants, and "is not conducive to the development of an effective market for hedges against risk".

The regulator said there was no need for penalties because prices in the pool, a highly peripheral market, were below the cost of power production. But he is now becoming increasingly alarmed at the level of prices in the contract market, where the bulk of electricity is bought and sold. When three-year contracts, put in place by the government ahead of privatisation, expire next spring, Professor Littlechild said, he would expect the benefit of lower fuel prices and reduced operating costs to be passed on.

"A move towards more realistic pool prices should be accompanied by a more competitive contract market," Professor Littlechild said.

That clear warning, voiced by the regulator for the second time in as many weeks, leaves the generators in no doubt that they are expected to start sharing the benefit of cost-



Name to be reckoned with: Stephen Littlechild, yesterday, accepted the possibility of a monopolies enquiry

## Shares surge close to record level

By JANET BUSH AND MICHAEL CLARK

BRITISH share prices rose to near-record highs on very high volume. In what appeared to be the start of a traditional pre-Christmas rally, the surge occurred despite government figures containing more evidence of economic weakness.

The FT-SE 100 index jumped 49.4 points to 2,789.7, compared with its record high of 2,792.0 on December 1. Turnover, at 940 million shares, was the highest since sterling left the Exchange Rate Mechanism on September 16.

The burst of buying seemed to start for purely technical reasons, with the expiry of a December futures contract, but since last week, investors have been tying up the loose ends of their portfolios before

the year end. Most traders were caught on the hop. The rush was signalled by the expiry of the financial future December series around mid-morning.

Investors have been encouraged by predictions from several securities houses that the index will breach the 3,000 level early in the new year as the market gears up for economic recovery.

Fund managers are reluctant to leave spare funds on deposit, because of the drop in interest rates since Black Wednesday. Many regard the London stock market as the cheapest in the world, and likely to benefit quickly from an economic pick-up.

Second line companies also attracted attention, but stock shortages meant that not all

buying orders were completed. There was little justification for pre-Christmas cheer from economic statistics. Sterling traded quietly and ended little changed. Most disappointing was news from the Bank of England of weakness in the money supply, which suggests that demand for credit remains low.

The M4 measure of money supply fell a provisional, seasonally adjusted 0.2 per cent in November; its annual rate of growth dropped to 4.7 per cent, from 5.4 per cent in October. M4 is not officially targeted by the government but there is a "monitoring" range of 4 to 8 per cent.

The most significant figure was M4 lending, which includes mortgage lending by banks and building societies

Trade gap narrows, page 18

## Isosceles asks banks for delay on debts

By OUR BANKING CORRESPONDENT

ISOSCELES, the troubled supermarket group, has asked its bankers for an emergency standstill on its £1.4 billion debts by Christmas to delay an interest bill of more than £20 million that falls due before the new year.

The group and its advisers made the plea at an all-day meeting on Thursday at Hill Samuel, the merchant bank called in to try to restructure the group's borrowings. Unless the banks agree the standstill soon, Isosceles could face administration.

Isosceles' difficulties follow a sharp worsening in its trading earlier this year and a fall in sales and margins. "Everywhere you look this group is in

trouble," a banker said. Isosceles is thought to have the funds to pay the imminent interest charge but would be left dangerously short of cashflow.

Midland, Isosceles' new agent bank, is trying to persuade the other 37 banks to agree the standstill rapidly to give Hill Samuel time to organise a refinancing. Midland is thought to have an exposure of more than £100 million, while others including the Industrial Bank of Japan, the Bank of Nova Scotia and Chemical Bank are all said to be owed more than £50 million. Sources close to the talks said that the banks were keen to ensure that the group continues trading.

## Tesco acquires French group as bridgehead on Continent

By NEIL BENNETT

TESCO has launched its long-awaited drive into continental Europe, with the acquisition of a controlling stake in a family-owned French supermarket group, for £176 million.

Sir Ian MacLaurin, Tesco's chairman, described the deal as "a good Christmas present on both sides of the Channel". Cateau has 90 food stores in north-west France, including local grocery shops called Cedimarche, medium-sized stores named Cedico, and two hypermarkets near Calais called HyperCedico.

Tesco is buying an 85 per cent stake in Cateau and

taking options on the family's remaining shares over the next three years. The management, almost entirely members of the Cateau family, have agreed to continue running the business until then.

Sir Ian said Tesco managers would meet their opposite numbers at Cateau to show them a few tricks. "They are very good in fresh produce but they are about six years behind us in other things, like distribution," Tesco plans to introduce own-brand goods into the stores to boost margins.

"We have always said we wanted to diversify abroad but we have had strict criteria," Sir Ian said. "We came across

Cateau in 1989 and started to talk to them early this year. Cateau is in France, where we want to be, and has good management. It is not big but this will be a good learning curve. This is a toehold and we will take it slowly, but hopefully we will look back on this as our first step into Europe."

Tesco will fund the acquisition out of its own resources, since it represents the cost of less than half a year's organic expansion. Last year, Cateau had sales of Fr2.87 billion (£341 million) and a pre-tax profit of Fr126 million, giving it some of the highest operating margins of a French food retailer.

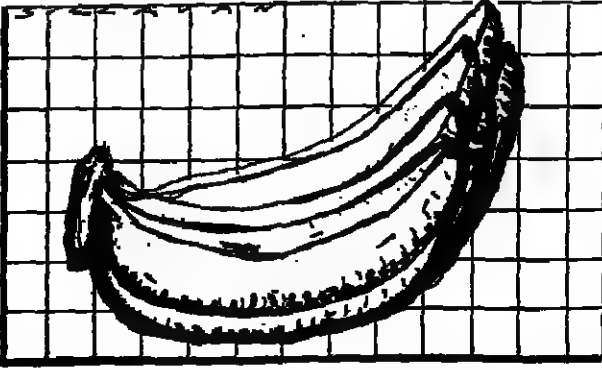
## European import deal zips up the great banana split

By COLIN NARBROUGH  
WORLD TRADE CORRESPONDENT

HAVING plucked accord from near-debate at the Edinburgh summit, the European Community has harvested another success in the dying days of Britain's presidency by sealing the historic split over the banana.

What is a humble, somehow funny, fruit, to most of Europe's consumers, is a cash crop of life-or-death importance to developing nations in the Caribbean and Africa. Britain and other former colonial powers have protected such growers interests, even though it has meant paying more for, in some cases, under-sized bananas.

Efforts to produce a common European trade policy had since the Treaty of Rome



in 1957 failed to overcome a fundamental division on bananas. But the start of the single market next month and the wider goal of a world trade pact provided powerful incentives for cleaning up the messy banana regime and switching from quotas to a tariff-based system.

The Germans, easily Europe's biggest banana eaters and unbundled by empire, headed the cheap banana camp, buying "dollar" fruit from Latin America. Britain, France, Spain and Portugal, mindful of former and current overseas territories, have pursued preferential trade.

Arthur Dunkel, director-general of the General Agree-

ment on Tariffs and Trade, underlined the problem in recent remarks to *The Times*. "Everyone is split on bananas," he said. Mr Dunkel, struggling to bring the world trade talks to a successful conclusion, said that Community was not alone in being split over the banana issue. The Latin Americans and the Africa-Caribbean and Pacific group were divided too.

Yet, after a four-day wrangle, Community agriculture ministers agreed on Thursday to limit imports of Latin American bananas and protect the Community's growers and Caribbean and African producers. Latin American fruit will be subject to a tariff of 20 per cent on 2 million tonnes a year, about 400,000 tonnes below present levels. Additional imports will be charged 170 per cent. Pro-

duce from African and Caribbean suppliers will enter the Community tariff-free in amounts based on recent import levels.

The German Hausfrau looks set to pay more for her bananas, while Britons should see prices slip. Shares in Geest, Britain's biggest banana importer, rose 53p to 343p in response to the deal. Fyffes shares rose 10p to 80p.

The Latin Americans have threatened to take the matter to law, but the Caribbean Banana Exporters Association (CBEA) is more relaxed, though not entirely happy.

The new rules are only expected to come into force in the second half of next year. In the interim, British customs are enhancing anti-smuggling surveillance to prevent importers rushing in the low-price banana.

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# Asda profit beats City forecasts

By GEORGE SIVELL

ASDA, the food retailer, surprised the City yesterday with better-than-expected results for the first half, sending the shares up 7p to 60 1/2p.

The recovery to pre-tax profits of £54.8 million in the six months to November 14 from losses of £68.8 million easily tops City forecasts of between £31 million and £37 million. It is a stark contrast to the Asda of a year ago, when Archie Norman, the chief executive, was drafted in. His first act was to save a £357 million rights issue, badly needed to cut debts of £931 million.

But Asda was still cautious yesterday about delivering its three-year recovery programme. Patrick Gillam, the chairman, said: "These results demonstrate that our new management team is establishing the platform for recovery. The group is now on a sound financial basis." But he pointed out that Asda faced substantial competition, including 35 supermarkets that had opened in local rivalry to Asda in the first half.

The dividend has been cut from 1.25p to 0.5p. This had been predicted as part of the recovery plan. Cover of two times was forecasted; earnings before exceptional items rose from 0.52p to 1.34p a share. Basic earnings recovered to 2.01p from losses of 5.71p.

Allied Maples reduced losses from £13.2 million to £11.9 million on sales down from £100 million to £97.3 million. Asda says the carpet and furniture market remained weak. Allied is withdrawing from soft furnishings and is closing 15 loss-making stores and its head office.

At the operating level, Asda profits improved from £74 million to £79.9 million on



Reason to refurbish: Archie Norman, the chief executive, who will receive £100,000 as a first-year bonus, says older stores need attention

sales up from £2,303.5 million to £2,347.5 million. Interest charges fell from £63.7 million to £34.4 million, leaving profit before exceptional items up from £10.1 million to £46.1 million. Asda made a net exceptional gain of £8.7 million, the balance between a £26.2 million gain on the disposal of sites and a £17.5 million exceptional cost of a provision against interest swaps that are no longer needed because of

the reduction in debts. The swaps locked £700 million of Asda debt into rates between 11 and 13 per cent.

The £69.1 million profit on the sale of the stake in MFI helped produce a retained profit of £102.7 million, against a loss of £106.3 million this time last year.

Debits have been cut from £931 million at the time of last October's cash call to £471.6 million at the half year end,

thanks to the profit on the MFI stake sale, property sales and a £60 million operating cash inflow in the first half.

Asda announced yesterday that it had negotiated a £300 million syndicated bank facility with National Westminster and Swiss Bank to replace a facility agreed at the time of the cash call. The new facility carried with it a softer set of covenants.

Mr Norman said he be-

lieved Asda debts would now be stable and that the spending on refurbishment would be financed out of cash flow.

Provisions for restructuring set up last year are shown in the balance sheet to have shrunk from £161.8 million to £146 million. Six of Asda's 204 stores have undergone major works, while Mr Norman said: "The older Asda stores are in serious need of attention."

Mr Gillam said yesterday that the group had talks with institutions over an incentive package for directors. It would be revealed in the annual report at the year end. Mr Norman has had his salary set at £325,000 and will receive a first-year bonus of £100,000.

He has also been granted 4 million share options exercisable in March 1995 at 38.5p.

Temps, page 19

## Trade gap narrows to £2.2bn

By JANET BUSH, ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

BRITAIN'S earnings from invisible trade, such as tourism and profits on overseas investments, helped prevent a further deterioration in the current account of the balance of payments in the third quarter.

The current account deficit totalled £2.2 billion in the period compared with £3.1 billion in the second quarter, an improvement entirely accounted for by a £1.1 billion surplus on invisible trade, according to final figures released yesterday by the Central Statistical Office.

The deficit on visible trade in the quarter was £3.3 billion compared with £3.2 billion in the second quarter.

In its provisional figures, the CSO had estimated an invisibles contribution of only

£300 million, which left the current account £2.9 billion in the red. Provisional figures for invisible trade are based on very little hard data and are often subject to large revisions. Invisible earnings were very substantial in the 1980s during the era of financial deregulation and huge earnings by the City of London. But, as recession hit the country and the financial services sector, invisibles slumped. In the first two quarters of this year, invisible earnings were still at a low ebb, with a surplus of £186 million in the first quarter and only £100 million in the second. But yesterday's final third quarter figures suggest that invisible trade is beginning to recover.

Earnings from interest, profits and dividends were particularly buoyant. Phillips & Drew said the surplus in invisible trade should improve modestly over the course of next year and 1994 as the effect of lower interest rates feed through fully and the pound's devaluation increases the sterling value of overseas earnings. The securities house also said that the current account would remain in substantial deficit.

One of the deepest concerns about the recession has been Britain's persistent current account deficit as imports have remained buoyant despite weak demand.

As the economy recovers, experience suggests that the visible trade balance will deteriorate further again, making the invisible performance even more crucial.

Another EPA official said that Japan's domestic demand was forecast to contribute a 3.4 per cent rise in GNP in 1993-4, although external demand would make for a 0.1 per cent drop.

The government is due to officially announce its forecast on economic growth rate and other conditions after the cabinet endorses the data at an extraordinary meeting on Sunday.

(Reuters).

## BAe will shed 600 more jobs

By ROSS TREMAN, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

BRITISH Aerospace is seeking 600 redundancies at two regional aircraft factories, bringing to 1,250 the number of job losses announced by the company in the past few days.

BAe blamed deferrals of orders by recession-hit customers for the job losses, which will affect 350 workers at Woodford, in Greater Manchester, and 250 at the nearby Chadderton site.

BAe said on Wednesday that it would shed 650 jobs next year at Filton, Bristol, and Brough, near Chester. The extra job losses were announced as Scottish Enterprise, a body that seeks to promote job creation in Scotland, announced that it was shedding 60 staff in Glasgow as part of a restructuring to improve efficiency.

Meanwhile, a French-owned car components manufacturer, which supplies parts to Toyota's new plant at Burnaston, Derbyshire, said it would create 300 jobs at a new factory in the Midlands.

Sommer Industries, which already has a plant in Washington, Tyne and Wear, supplying the Nissan factory in Sunderland, will set up the factory at Fradley Park, near Burton upon Trent, Staffordshire. Production is expected to begin by next June.

(Reuters).

## Societies suffer net fall in funds

By LIZ DOLAN

A STEEP decline in savings rates after Black Wednesday has taken its toll on the amount of money held in building society accounts.

Figures released yesterday by the Building Societies Association showed that more cash was withdrawn from accounts last month than was paid in. The societies suffered a net decline in funds of £184 million in November, compared with a net inflow of £281 million during the previous month.

Rates were now a third lower than they were in the last summer, an association spokesman admitted. "Where you could get 9 per cent on your savings before Britain left the ERM, you now only get 6 per cent."

Other reasons for the decline in building society receipts included the fact that more people were using spare cash to repay borrowings, he said. People are also apparently inclined to withdraw savings to buy Christmas presents this year, rather than build up debts on credit card accounts.

Competition from National Savings, while not as severe as during the summer, was still an important factor. This was likely to be a problem for some time to come, given the government's heavy borrowing requirement, the association said. There is also a direct

correlation between savings deposit levels and house-buying activity.

This is partly due to the inheritance factor. Well over half the money released by the sale of inherited property goes into building society accounts. Consequently, when house sales are sluggish, cash that would otherwise be channelled into building societies is trapped in bricks and mortar instead.

Mortgage lending in November was higher than in the previous month, but lower in both October and November than in the corresponding period last year. Gross mortgage lending increased to £2.09 billion last month from £1.99 billion in October. This figure is expected to fall in December, but that is normal for this time of the year.

Mark Boleat, director-general of the association, said there was anecdotal evidence of a return to household confidence following the recent successive reductions in UK base rates. This was fuelling hopes of some improvement in the housing market next spring. He said the outflow from building society accounts in November was "not unexpected", given the background of a generally disappointing pattern of savings this year.

## BUSINESS ROUND-UP

### Trio trust transformed by Bierbaum purchase

TRIO Investment Trust has been transformed into a financial service group with the £25.5 million acquisition of Martin Bierbaum, the international money broker. The trust is raising £25.8 million from a large rights issue and a placing to pay for the deal. Trio has been forced to surrender its investment trust status as part of the deal and is proposing to rename itself Trio Holdings. The trust is buying Bierbaum from a consortium of banks that repossessed the broker from Quadrex. Gary Klesh's financial group. Confirmation of the deal follows months of negotiations.

Trio is buying Bierbaum free of all debts. The group also estimates that the broker's operating profits for the year to end-September were £6.5 million. The trust is offering nine shares for every two held by shareholders at 50p each, 5p lower than its suspension price, to raise £10.8 million. Institutions have, meanwhile, agreed to buy 30 million shares for £15 million.

### Fraud admitted

LOURDES Lopez, 44, a former assistant manager of the West New York branch of National Westminster bank, admitted her involvement in a fraud and faces a maximum sentence of 30 years in jail and a \$1 million fine, the US Department of Justice said. She was charged with assisting Leonard Grazzola, Union City Treasurer in 1989 and 1990, in committing fraud by opening a NatWest account for him into which he deposited \$3.8 million in embezzled Union City funds.

### Cooklin compensated

LAURENCE Cooklin, former chief executive of Burton Group and the replacement for Sir Ralph Halpern, will receive compensation of about £1.5 million, the report and accounts show. Burton paid total compensation of £1.83 million for loss of office, with the balance going to Richard Pym, the director who was in charge of property. Mr Cooklin received £773,000 as a straight compensation package, or about one-and-a-half times' salary, and was paid a similar amount under a bonus scheme run by the former board.

### Nike orders run ahead

NIKE said its worldwide orders for athletic footwear and apparel scheduled for delivery between December and April totalled \$1.6 billion, 18 per cent higher than the same period last year. Second-quarter earnings to November 30 totalled \$76 million, or \$0.98 per share (\$61.5 million or \$0.80 per share). Nike said its total international sales grew 30 per cent to a record \$372.9 million and represented 43 per cent of second quarter revenues, compared to 39 per cent in the same period last year.

### Dwyer deeper in red

LOSSES at Dwyer, the property investment company, deepened from £3.89 million before tax to £6.94 million in the year to September 30, after further provisions of £4.8 million against the declining value of investment properties. Total exceptional charges were £5.4 million. Net rents moved forward to £5.09 million from £4.5 million but profits from property sales declined from £995,000 to £180,000. The company said the balance sheet remained strong with a net worth of £21.5 million. There is no dividend (nil paid).

### Losses reduced at J&S

LOSSES at Jones & Shipman, the machine tool maker, were reduced from £2.5 million to £981,000 in the six months to end-September after a restructuring to meet difficult market conditions. The workforce has been cut from 500 to 372 and is expected to fall further to 260. Losses were trimmed from 17.7p a share to 8.2p. There is again no dividend. Turnover was maintained at £6.27 million (£6.7 million), resulting in an operating loss of £819,000 (£2.1 million loss). The group saw "no evidence of positive change in the deep recession".

### Kleen-e-ze in the black

KLEEN-E-ZE swept back into the black in the 12 months to August 30 after three years in the red. Rationalisation helped deliver a pre-tax profit of £86,000 (£1.14 million loss). Earnings were 0.6p (16.73p losses) a share, but there is again no dividend. The company, based at Richmond, Surrey, consists of its traditional door-to-door sales of housewares, and Innovations, which sells novel gadgets through the post and in shops.

### Baird buys Van Gils

WILLIAM Baird, the textiles and engineering group, has acquired the Van Gils menswear brand from receivers for £600,000. Baird plans to invest £3 million in the business, which had turnover of £35 million in 1991, over the next two years. Separately, Baird has sold its insulation contracting businesses in Britain and, conditionally, in the Middle East, to Cape for about £9.5 million. There is an initial consideration of £8.25 million in cash.

## Van Miert set to remould competition policy

### Brittan tipped for EC trade job

FROM TOM WALKER, IN BRUSSELS



"Market-oriented socialist": Karel Van Miert

SIR Leon Brittan is hotly tipped to become the European Community's external trade commissioner, an appointment that would almost certainly leave his present portfolio, competition, in the hands of Karel Van Miert, a socialist.

The Belgian commissioner for transport, credit, investment and consumer affairs has clashed with Sir Leon for allowing multimillion pound state aid for ailing airlines. He would be likely to remould the EC's competition policy, bringing it more in line with industrial policy and the wishes of France.

The change will not be confirmed until Tuesday, when Jacques Delors, president of the European Commission, announces his new line-up, but reliable Brussels sources are certain there will be no last-minute surprises. Sir Leon had made little secret of his wish to move to a high-profile external relations job, and Mr Van Miert has eyed the competition portfolio for some time. Experts — one described Mr Van Miert

as a "socialist of the market-oriented kind" — say the Belgian, a consummate consensus politician, would never have made a decision like Sir Leon's in the *affaire de Havilland* in the autumn of last year, which lost the former Thatcherite any standing with the French government.

Sir Leon prevented ATR, the Franco-Italian commuter aircraft maker, from taking

over Canada's de Havilland, saying it would give the company dominance in the EC market.

"He is a much subtler politician than Sir Leon," said one source. "He would never have taken a decision like that."

France has argued that there is only a global market in the plane-making business, so ATR would have had plenty

of competition. The significance of Mr Van Miert taking over cannot be overestimated. Sir Leon's attempts to deregulate state monopolies in telecommunications and energy may be abandoned, and more state aid may be allowed through to promote "Euro-champions". France's huge public sector is likely to breathe a sigh of relief.

The portfolio of Martin Bangemann, the industry commissioner, will probably expand to include the allocation of research and development money, he and Mr Van Miert may soon be pursuing interventionist policies that would be anathema to Sir Leon.

M Delors wants more EC cash to be pumped into R&D. The changeover will allow Sir Leon to bring his liberal trade thinking on to the world stage. He will take over Gatt negotiations from the Dutchman Frans Andriessen, and is likely to put the bite back into the commission's dealings with America.

He will also be dealing with the nations of the former Soviet bloc, overseeing aid programmes for eastern and central Europe.

SELECTIVE support by fund managers enabled government securities to make headway in thin conditions during early trading. Prices reached the appropriate level to enable the Bank of England to supply small amounts of stock from the three taplets, totalling £700 million, issued last week. But prices generally showed little sign of maintaining the early pace and

## BRITISH FUNDS

later began to boil over as demand dried up. Brokers said most of the support was selective as institutions continued squaring up their year-end positions. This week's economic news has failed to provide any hard evidence that the long-awaited recovery may be under way. As a result, most investors are unwilling to chase the market sharply higher until

positive economic news is forthcoming. In the futures market, only 7,500 contracts were completed as the March series of the long gilt closed a couple of ticks down. In the cash market, Exchequer 9 per cent 2012 finished four ticks down at £101 1/2, while at the shorter end Exchequer 9 1/2 per cent 1998 ended two ticks easier at £109 1/2.

High	Low	Stock	Price	Int	Yld	Gr	Yld
100	99	FTSE 100	2,347.5	6.02	6.47	111	98
100	99	FTSE 100	2,347.5	6.02	6.47	111	98
100	99	FTSE 100	2,347.5	6.02	6.47	111	98
100	99	FTSE 100	2,347.5	6.02	6.47	111	98
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## THE SUNDAY TIMES

### Collision course

At Sunderland it takes Nissan 19 hours to make a car while Ford and General Motors need 31 hours. Europe's established car-makers now face a nightmare scenario: the coincidence of a sales decline with the explosion of ultra-low-cost Japanese production from Toyota's new Derby plant, Honda at Swindon and Nissan.

Business Focus, The Sunday Times tomorrow

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## BUSINESS INTERVIEW: Sir Jeremy Morse

## Uncertainty marks the end of an era at Lloyds

The outgoing chairman of Lloyds Bank looks back on his career and tells Neil Bennett of his fears for the future

Sir Jeremy Morse ought to be basking in the warm glow of an illustrious career. Instead, he is worried about leaving an industry, on February 5, after almost 40 years, when its reputation is near an all-time low and its future is uncertain.

He voiced his fears in his presidential address to the Chartered Institute of Bankers last week, and in an interview as he prepared his message. The speech was titled "In praise of banking", but was anything but upbeat.

Sir Jeremy attacked the technological revolution in the industry, which, he said, had increased errors, unsettled staff and alienated the public. He reminisced about the days of cross-subsidisation, when customers unwittingly paid for their banking services by keeping interest-free funds in the current accounts. Finally, he called for an emphasis on fundamental values of honesty, reliability, fairness and competence.

What makes this Luddite rallying cry more remarkable is that it comes from the chairman of a bank that has spearheaded innovation within the industry. Lloyds was the first bank to offer interest on current accounts, to charge an annual fee on credit cards, and, most important, was one of the earliest to plunge into the life assurance market with the acquisition of Abbey Life.

Now, Sir Jeremy questions many of these changes, and even says Lloyds is too concentrated on the British market, even though it has spent most of a decade shedding its overseas interests. If this is not a conversion on the road to Damascus, Sir Jeremy is certainly pausing at the threshold of his office as he leaves.

At first meeting, Sir Jeremy comes across as an amiable buffer who needs to be humoured. But he is nothing of the kind. Underneath is an implacable manager who issues orders in the most mellowness but never leaves room for uncertainty or argument.

This combination has allowed him to tread the delicate line between government and com-

merce that every bank chairman must do. After 15 years, he is the longest-standing chairman of the world's top 50 banks and has served opposite five chairmen at Midland and four at Barclays.

He has much to be proud of from his leadership of Lloyds. He steered the bank away from near-destruction at the height of the Latin American debt crisis in the early eighties. Then he avoided many of the pitfalls of the eighties and concentrated on solid, low-risk businesses such as life assurance.

Today, by a mixture of luck and sound management, Lloyds is the country's most profitable bank, ahead of both Barclays and National Westminster, which are more than twice the size.

Sir Jeremy said: "I have had quite a long enough stint for the bank and I am happy to have seen the Latin American debt affair through to where you can see a conclusion. My great disappointment is to be leaving when things are so gloomy, when it is such a hard time for people in the branches." In his address, he made it clear how low the reputation of the banking system has sunk because of the recession and the upheaval in

its basic service. "The two have produced the biggest wave of anti-bank sentiment in Britain since the 1930s. As then, the government has been happy to find someone else to share the blame for the hardships in the economy."

Perhaps Sir Jeremy's most surprising attack is against the technology Lloyds and the other banks have invested in so heavily. "Our service has deteriorated, there are errors and it sometimes seems impersonal. When I began, there was almost a handwritten system that had very few errors because it was run by highly intelligent people. An awful lot of our errors occur today through the interaction between men and machines."

The technology, he feels, has devalued the bank's staff, forced some to switch unwillingly from processing payments to selling products, and made thousands of others surplus to requirements. "In branches and supporting depart-



Listening in to grass-roots opinion: Sir Jeremy Morse is well aware of what the public says about Lloyds and other banks

ments, staff work harder than their predecessors and have less job security... The overall impact has been too big to manage without damaging both customer relationships and the public image of banking."

Just as unexpected is Sir Jeremy's admission that as chairman of an organisation that has spent hundreds of millions of pounds on technology, he does not know how to use a word processor; one of his ambitions for retirement is that his wife will teach him.

Sir Jeremy's criticisms of the trend in banks towards selling products rather than providing an all-encompassing service also stands in stark contrast to the developments in Lloyds in the past five years. In his address to the institute, he seemed to question the product expansion, particularly into life assurance and pensions, which all the banks, particularly Lloyds,

have pursued since the mid-eighties.

"Some [additions] are no more than conventional diversifications but others are avowed attempts to move away from banking towards other financial services which are perceived as more profitable or less risky. The traditional banker who is fairly well insulated to being attacked from outside... has also to face this attack from within."

Although Sir Jeremy obviously pines for a return to some of the traditional values of banking, he is not uncritical of the past. When he joined Lloyds as deputy chairman in 1975, the board had more than 30 directors and had to deal with all domestic matters and take reports from the international board. "The agenda was wildly confused. We would move from a report on the Pacific to a discussion about the Wolverhampton branch," he said. The most funda-

mental change he has witnessed in banking is that its management now treat it as a business. "When I arrived, there was not enough profit-consciousness. Half of the people in the domestic bank thought it was a public service."

But while he has survived to introduce greater commercial awareness in the bank throughout his chairmanship, he now stresses that banking has some special qualities and that its managers must be as aware of those differences as they understand commercial reality.

"There are very few special qualities, but the most important is that bankers deal in other people's money. People expect more from those who handle their money."

Nevertheless, Lloyds has prospered by being run as a business. Its success stems from its greatest disaster, the Latin American debt crisis in 1982, five years after Sir

Jeremy took office. Today, he is unrepentant about Lloyds' lending in Latin America, which left the bank with bad sovereign loans of more than £4 billion and, in 1990, plunged the bank to a loss of £715 million, the largest ever at a British bank. "I don't feel any shame about that because we were the bank on the ground," he said. Lloyds lent through the Bank of Latin and South America, its subsidiary.

"Our dollar lending in those countries had a far higher proportion of good customers who could have repaid in local currency. When the market went belly up, we got double our share of bad loans. But we got the strategy right," he said.

unless you have felt that. You cannot be a good rider unless you have fallen off." The board realised the only way it could ever provide against the loans was to generate profits from personal and small companies banking, its core business. "We knew we had better not take any risks elsewhere, and we missed all sorts of bunkers by that decision, like stockbroking and property lending." Admittedly, some bunkers were missed by luck rather than judgment, such as the bank's failed bid for Standard Chartered in 1986.

Lloyds became a pre-eminent personal bank, and earned the reserves to provide against its sovereign loans - but only just. It made the main provisions in 1990, as the domestic recession was already gathering pace and domestic bad debts were climbing. If the recession had begun a year earlier, the bank would have struggled.

Throughout Lloyds' recovery, Sir Jeremy was partnered by Brian Pittman, the bank's hard-nosed but brilliant chief executive. Sir Jeremy is a strong believer that any large bank needs two leaders. "I have always worked on the 'two hands on the tiller' principle. It does not matter what the people are called or the division of their duties but they should both bring a contribution to the strategy. A duo works particularly well for a bank because there are so many pitfalls to avoid."

Sir Jeremy is the aesthetic, academic strategist, while Mr Pittman is a follower of popular culture, a jazz saxophonist with a voracity for statistics and detail. The duo has been immensely productive, but there has never been much personal warmth between them. At times they have clashed on fundamental issues. "There is a tension of ideas between us. But if you are different you get enormous strength in bringing different points together."

The key of Sir Jeremy's farewell message is a call for more balance and moderation in the banking industry. Balance between the interests of customers and shareholders, balance between innovation and service and, above all, moderation in lending.

He summed up his speech in the Merchant Taylors' Hall last week with acknowledgment of the many contradictions in banking that must be tackled by his successors. "Banking combines elements of trade and profession, art and science, of tradition and innovation. It is more concerned with people and less with figures than other financial callings... I am proud to have been a banker for almost 40 years."

## Thames focuses on independent role

THE failure of Thames TV to win the Channel 5 franchise, despite the lack of other runners, effectively relegates the group from big league broadcaster to the role of independent television producer, despite its 15 per cent holding in UK Gold, the satellite channel.

It is particularly piquant, therefore, that Triton, one of the small independents in the TV sector, should have chosen the same day to announce the suspension of share dealings.

Thames shares plunged 22p to 158p on the news from the Independent Television Commission, which seems a little harsh given that the broad reasoning behind the ITC decision was that the service was not sufficiently profitable on the basis of the business plan drawn up by the participants.

There are two views in the City on independent producers. The bears claim that their troubles in the past cannot but worsen given the squeeze on advertising revenue.

The more optimistic, in spite of the troubles of Triton, suggest that the legal requirement of the big broadcasters to use independents, coupled with the rise of other broadcasting media such as cable and satellite, mean an increasing amount of the software that reaches our screens must come from outfits such as Thames.

Richard Dunn, the Thames chief executive, has suggested revenue of more than £100 million from the company next year after its ITV franchise ends. Assets comprise the UK Gold stake, the programme library and the production company and facilities in Teddington, south west London.



Revenue forecast: Richard Dunn, chief executive of Thames TV, is looking for £100m

## Asda

IT makes a change to receive a pleasant surprise from Asda but it may be too early for investors to get excited.

Asda, while pleased that the first six months of a three-year recovery plan have worked, is cautious. Patrick Gillam, the chairman, points to the competitive pressure of 35 rival superstore openings in the first half. Archie Norman, the chief executive, says the grocery market has been flat for the last four

months and expects it to remain so for the rest of this year. He adds that, like everyone, Asda is "walking up the down escalator".

Asda claims, however, to have enjoyed like-for-like sales increases in line with the rest of the industry since April of this year, instead of lagging by 2 points as has been the recent tradition. Productivity has also improved by 10 per cent as measured by sales per employee. The headcount has fallen from 37,331 to 35,561

over the half year. Now the group has a stable balance sheet to work from.

Borrowings are down to £472 million, or 39 per cent of shareholders funds, against £678 million in May and £931 million as the £357 million cash call was launched in October 1991. Debts have fallen to the extent that a provision of £17.5 million has been made against interest swaps that are no longer needed. Asda revealed a new £300 million syndicated facility with its

banks yesterday, but investors should bear in mind that most of Asda's debt is fixed long term at 10.5 per cent.

Borrowings were helped by a £69.1 million profit from the MFI stake and £26.2 million from the sale of surplus sites.

But under the recovery plan, Asda does not see itself building new stores on fresh sites until year three. It can only watch as Tesco, J Sainsbury and Argyl open up, and is forced to increase marketing spending and perhaps squeeze margins to defend against local competition.

Even so, there are advantages. It forces Asda to spend on upgrading its existing stores. Capital spending of £130 million is expected over the year.

Mr Gillam compares the present rush to spend in new food retail stores to the investment by oil companies in the seventies and eighties that has left them with thin returns. As the former chairman of BP Oil, he should know.

Analysts expect Asda to deliver £130 million before tax for the full year, against previous expectations of just over £100 million. At £130 million, earnings would be 3.9p, pointing to a total dividend of about 1.35p, and putting the shares on a yield of 2.95 per cent and a multiple of 15.6 at yesterday's price of 61p, up 7.5p.

The City is divided on how to rate Asda. The optimists say the Asda brand is not as dead as people thought it was and that the board has plenty of scope for cost cuts to boost cash flow. They have put the shares back on the buy list and see a target of 75p for the shares over the next six months.

Against that, those in the City who had previously rated Asda as a recovery stock are now sated and rate the shares as a hold. Given the competition and recession in the grocery business, best to rate the shares merely as a hold.

## Peking accuses Jardine of conspiracy on HK future

FROM REUTERS IN HONG KONG

PEKING turned its fury on Hong Kong's oldest colonial conglomerate, sending the stock market tumbling again. The official Xinhua news agency accused Jardine Matheson of conspiring with Chris Patten, the governor, in his campaign for democratic reform before Hong Kong returns to China in 1997.

The attack wiped another 136.8 points off the Hang Seng index, which has been battered in recent weeks by pressure from Peking aimed at forcing Mr Patten into dropping his proposals. The index ended 2.6 per cent down at 5,192.66.

Jardine shares plunged by HK\$2.75, to HK\$42.75. That means they have lost almost 14 per cent of their value in just two days. "We have no comment," said Neil McNamara, Jardine's general manager. "All we can do is business as usual." Xinhua did not name Jardine, but by referring to an old British conglomerate that sold opium to China, it made its target clear.

The agency described Jardine as "a bad element" in Hong Kong's business com-

munity and a "tooter" that earned two thirds of its revenue from Hong Kong and China.

The Jardine Group, now a trading empire ranging from property through luxury car dealerships to supermarkets, grew out of the 19th century China opium trade.

Analysts said Xinhua's attack appeared to be part of Peking's campaign to frighten Hong Kong's business community into putting pressure on Mr Patten to drop his proposals before they go to the Legislative Council in February. Mr Patten made a veiled

attack on China for trying to undermine local business confidence.

"I would never and will never do anything which undermines that confidence," he told reporters. "I would certainly never attack an important Hong Kong employer, an employer which looks after the well-being and living standards of many families and many individuals."

Business confidence has taken a battering since Mr Patten announced his proposals in October. Earlier this month, the Hang Seng index plunged 17 per cent in four days, when Peking threatened that it would scrap, after 1997, business contracts signed by the colonial government if China did not approve of them.

Jardine has drawn Peking's wrath with a series of moves indicating an apparent lack of confidence in Hong Kong's administration after the 1997 return to China.

The group shifted its legal domicile to Bermuda in 1984. This year, it moved its primary stock market listing to London. Analysts said the conglomerate was unwilling to accept Hong Kong as its main regulator after 1997.



Patten: counter-attack

## Ford expected to lose record \$6bn

FROM PHILIP ROBINSON IN NEW YORK

FORD which is cutting 10,000 European jobs next year, is almost certain to end this year more than \$6 billion in the red, a record for any American company.

The biggest debit will be a \$7.5 billion provision for future health and pension costs, a charge it must take either in one year or over the next 20 years as part of new accounting rules. Ford will also charge \$419 million as the cost of cutting 7,200 hourly paid workers and 2,555 salaried staff, mostly in Britain and Germany.

The company has already forecast a loss in the final three months of this year and its combined costs for health and jobs cuts will more than wipe

out the \$681.4 million profit Ford made in the first nine months of this year.

The company's projected annual loss is well ahead of the previous industry record, held by General Motors, the rival car company, which last year lost \$4.5 billion. GM's losses were incurred on operations and not as part of any accounting rule change.

Ford has yet to make the provisions and it will be the company's second consecutive year in the red. Last year, it lost \$2.26 billion on sales of \$88.27 billion.

The company has narrowed the gap outside America where nine-month losses fell from \$764 million to \$218 million. But it has been badly

affected by the European currency crisis, making cars in strong currency countries and losing sales in those with weak currencies, because the foreign exchange makes its forecast prices uncompetitive.

Ford believes Britain, which is its most important European market but where sales have halved since 1989, has bottomed and should produce better results next year. Lee Iacocca, the Chrysler chairman, said its board will decide in February whether to recognise a required non-cash charge for retiree health care benefits in the fourth quarter of 1992 or the first quarter of 1993. Chrysler estimates a transition obligation of \$3 billion to \$4 billion.







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# WEEKEND MONEY

THE TIMES SATURDAY DECEMBER 19 1992

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Edited by Sara McConnell

Deep division over back-up scheme in the wake of Maxwell fraud

## Pressure intensifies for pension compensation

By Sara McConnell

PRESSURE on the government to introduce a compensation fund for members of company pension schemes as part of a radical overhaul of pension regulation intensified this week. The industry, however, remains deeply divided over how wide ranging any compensation scheme ought to be.

Many people who find their pensions are underfunded, or who have lost benefits through maladministration, may not be covered if the government accepts proposals for more limited compensation.

The Pension Law Review Committee received the last of more than 1,000 submissions this week as the deadline passed for comments on a wide-ranging questionnaire. The comments received from all sectors of the pensions industry, unions and members of the public, are likely to form the basis for a new pensions regime.

The committee was set up under Professor Roy Goode this summer after it was discovered that £500 million was missing from the pension funds of companies controlled by Robert Maxwell. Only £140 million of this has so far been retrieved. Those running and administering company

schemes insist that Maxwell was an aberration and that most pension schemes are honestly and properly run. However, the submissions to the Goode committee demonstrate a growing concern that occupational pensions are insufficiently regulated and that scheme members have no financial redress outside the courts, even if employers are found to have been perpetrating fraud.

The Goode committee has been told by the various bodies making submissions that there should be a single, strong statutory regulator for occupational pension schemes. This would have the power to take over the administration of a pension scheme, or appoint an independent trustee. It would also take over the duties of the pensions ombudsman, the occupational pensions board — which supervises schemes to check that they conform with the regulations — and the pensions registry, which traces the pension rights of scheme members.

Stronger supervision and regulation of pension schemes would, in theory, reduce the need for a compensation scheme, as would compulsory minimum funding of the

scheme so that there was enough money to pay the promised benefits. Submissions to the committee said that if funding fell below the minimum level, employers should be obliged to make up the shortfall.

However, John Quarrell, partner in Nabarro Nathanson and one of the advisers involved in unearthing funds missing from Maxwell pensions, said: "There is nothing that can be done to stop a man who is determined to do something regardless of the law. A man like Maxwell thought, and I believe this, that he was beyond and above the law."

A compensation scheme is needed as a final safety net, the pensions industry believes. Unlike other investors saving for their futures, members of final salary occupational pension schemes are not at present covered by any compensation scheme.

The only limited redress could come from the Investors' Compensation Scheme if an investment management company, regulated by the Investment Managers' Regulatory Organisation (Imro) handling pension fund money, were declared in default. The maximum payout under the ICS is, however,

only £48,000 per person. Those whose employers have set up pension schemes with insurance companies would be covered by the Policyholders' Protection Act if the insurance company investing the pension money became insolvent or where there was fraud or maladministration. The Policyholders' Protection Board would pay up to 90 per cent of benefits to policyholders.

Similar limits are being suggested for members of company schemes. But bodies such as the Confederation of British Industry, as well as many individual employers, argue that a compensation scheme for company schemes should be restricted to paying out if there were proven fraud and that any payout under such a scheme should be limited. It should also be partially underwritten by the government.

The National Association of Pension Funds (NAPF) made a last-minute retreat this week in the face of threats from members to resign if the Association told the Goode committee that there should be compensation if members did not get their benefits because of underfunding or maladministration. In its sub-

mission to the Goode committee, the CBI said that it was "neither fair nor practical" for a compensation scheme to pay out to employees whose schemes had been underfunded or where maladministration had occurred, since this would mean good employers subsidising bad.

There is also concern that less scrupulous employers would be encouraged by the backdrop of a compensation scheme to invest recklessly and perhaps to misappropriate funds.

Others say that there is often a thin dividing line between fraud and other sorts of maladministration, and it could be difficult to decide when the compensation scheme should apply if it were limited. John Quarrell said: "It is almost impossible to restrict a compensation scheme to fraud. We all sympathise with the cry 'Why do the good have to subsidise the bad', but this is naive."

A full compensation scheme would be expensive for schemes to fund. Sean Hand, head of the pensions unit at Cameron Markby Hewitt, the firm of solicitors, said the expense of paying out could be reduced if both trustees and assets had to be compulsorily insured as a pre-condition of membership of the compensation scheme.

One way of paying for a scheme would be to build up a fund with regular compulsory contributions. Ian Aitken, partner in R Watson, the actuary, and chairman of the Pensions Management Institute working party on pension law reform, said an annual contribution of 1 per cent of the assets of all pension schemes would produce a compensation fund of £100 million in six years. Levies could also be charged when necessary. Another way of funding it would be to levy all schemes if one got into trouble and qualified for a payout under the compensation scheme.

## Time is running out for elderly GRE investors

Insurance companies' increasing reluctance to pay out proper compensation to investors who were sold the wrong policy is now getting beyond a joke. Some insurers appear to want to do everything in their power to prolong the process of getting claims paid and sorted. Their refusal to admit mistakes in many cases forces investors to spend much needed funds on solicitors' bills and even, in some cases, on court action. Worryingly, insurers do not always make it clear that policyholders can go to the ombudsman, whose services are independent and free.

The latest casualties of such attitudes are 500 elderly investors who took out home income plans from InterCity, a former tied agent of Guardian Royal Exchange. Thousands of elderly investors who were sold high-risk investment bond-based home income plans are still battling with insurance companies and agents for compensation.

While they fight, demands for repayments on mortgages taken out to fund investment bonds arrive with frightening regularity and the value of the bonds intended to provide enough to pay the mortgage and give people an income, falls still further. Some people who cannot pay the mortgage face having their homes repossessed.

The insurance ombudsman has told GRE that its offers of compensation to InterCity clients were inadequate. The compensation offered by GRE was, indeed, meagre. It took no account of the cost of taking out and servicing the mortgage but merely offered investors the option of getting the premiums paid into the bond back, plus interest. Alternatively, they could hold onto the bond; not a very generous offer if it was falling in value. Any award made by the insurance ombudsman would have been substantially more than this because it would have covered the cost of redeeming the mortgage, as well as distress payments.

None of the letters offering compensation from GRE so far seen by the ombudsman makes it clear that investors have a right to take their case to the ombudsman. It is hard to escape the conclusion that GRE moved promptly to make minimal compensation offers in order to get shot of the investors and remove any likelihood of them taking their claim elsewhere. Unfortunately, many are likely to be precluded from having their case reopened because they took legal advice before signing to accept the offer.

GRE says it told investors about the ombudsman. It also argues that the

ombudsman moved the goalposts and published new guidelines over the compensation that companies should offer home income plan investors. The guidelines were published, however, because the ombudsman was concerned about how little companies were paying.

Talks are continuing. GRE is questioning whether it should make improved offers to conform with the new guidelines, but at least one other life office in a similar situation is offering more, so it is clearly not impossible. The ombudsman will not guarantee people will receive more money but is starting a series of informal talks with investors, travelling to them if necessary.

The least GRE can now do is make these elderly investors an improved offer. They have already been waiting too long.

### Code of complaint

Banks still have a long way to go before they are loved by their customers. The Consumers' Association this week called the banks' approach to implementing the

new Code of Banking Practice "unacceptably slow" and their interpretation "parsimonious". The main problem, according to the CA, is that banks, with some honourable exceptions, have failed to communicate the code either to their customers or to their staff. The code was meant to present the banks in a more accommodating and friendly light by setting out their responsibilities to customers and what they could expect. It should have been welcomed as an opportunity by banks keen to avoid more negative publicity about unreasonable charges, administrative inefficiency and sheer bloody-mindedness.

At the moment, banks are not helping themselves. By not implementing the code fully, they are demonstrating some of the arrogance for which they are disliked by their customers. If head office and branch managers do not communicate with their branch staff, the staff cannot communicate with their customers. This breeds resentment and, in turn, a bad press.

The odd thing is, negative publicity clearly worries them. Branch staff at one major clearing bank have been asking head office why banks get a bad press. The bank went to commendable lengths to make a training video answering some of the staff's questions.

There needs to be much more of this soul searching both at branch level and head office.



COMMENT

SARA MCCONNELL



The balloon goes up, supported by Doug Taylor, Bill Day and Roger Lyons

## Date set for pension fight with Lucas

A HIGH court battle between Lucas Industries and 70 of its pensioners over the ownership of a £150 million pension surplus is due to begin on January 22 next year (Liz Dolan writes).

Pensioner Doug Taylor and colleagues from the Central Birmingham branch of the Lucas Pensioners' Association, are claiming that the money taken from the fund belonged to the fund members, not to the company. Their battle forms part of a wider campaign involving trade unions and other pensioners' groups that want pension fund assets to be used for the sole benefit of pension scheme members.

Mr Taylor, Roger Lyons, general secretary of the Manufacturing Science Finance Union, and Bill Day, national pensions officer with the GMB general union, are pictured, left, at the launch of the Charter for Pension Fund Democracy.

The charter calls for the total separation of pension funds assets from those of employers.

It also wants a majority of trustees of any occupational pension fund to be democratically appointed by members of the scheme, and demands that pensioners should have the right to representation on trustee boards.

The charter forms the basis of submissions by both the MSF and GMB to the Pension Law Review Committee.

Roger Lyons said: "Our response is fundamentally about democracy. We are urging the Goode committee to recommend a legal framework that will prevent employers dipping their hands into pension schemes whenever it suits them and give members the right to run their own pension funds in their own best interests."

## Switch from final salary schemes causes concern

By Liz Dolan

CONCERN is growing about the number of employers who are cutting staff pension costs by transferring employees from final salary schemes to higher-risk money purchase plans. The companies claim they are trying to save employees from punishing increases in contribution levels that will follow forthcoming changes in the law governing final salary schemes.

However, many in the pensions industry are convinced employers are using higher costs to employees as an excuse to free themselves from unwanted obligations. Final salary schemes are more expensive and restrictive to employers than money purchase schemes, but are often a much better bet for employees.

Frank Field MP, chairman of the House of Commons social security committee, this week expressed concern at the increasing number of companies following this route. In a memorandum to the pension law review committee, he said: "Money purchase schemes are what their name suggests. At the point of retirement, members will have a capital sum from which they will live on." "The timing

of those purchases can make a dramatic difference to the size of the pension an individual will receive." Evidence laid before the select committee showed that an individual who retired on October 23, 1987, would have ended up with a pension that was 30 per cent less than he or she would have earned had they retired a week earlier, Mr Field said.

Ron Spill, pensions controller at Legal & General, said: "I have a feeling that, in some cases, the decision to switch



Field's concern

may be welcomed by finance directors who dislike the openness of the final salary scheme."

Companies that set up final salary schemes in the 1970s, and were then cushioned during the 1980s by high investment and redundancy gains, were now facing costs they had not bargained for, he said. "There's no doubt that there's a fair amount of switching going on, though it's mainly at the smaller companies end of the market." Final salary schemes will soon be required to increase pensions each year by the rate of inflation to a maximum of 5 per cent.

This requirement was laid down in the 1990 Social Security Act, but cannot be implemented until a decision is made about how much extra funding will be needed to finance the equalisation of retirement ages for men and women. This depends on the outcome of a case currently going through the European courts concerning the relative pension rights of men and women employed by Colclough, the furnishings group that went bust a few years ago. Both changes are expected to be implemented within the

next year. Some employees blame the government for the way in which, as they see it, the good intentions behind the new legislation have backfired. Jim Hodges, a pilot with Brynmor European, the airline, said his company decided to transfer to a money purchase scheme after advisers said the changes in legislation would leave employees contributing more than 15 per cent of their salary to the final salary scheme. Mr Hodges said: "Now, instead of looking forward to a planned, comfortable retirement, I shall be left to the mercy of the bonuses and annuity rates in force on my 60th birthday."

Scottish Equitable has calculated that staff and employers could face increases in contributions of up to 70 per cent as a result of indexation and equalisation.

The actual cost to employees could be a good deal higher, in practice, as the calculations were based on the assumption that companies employed an equal number of men and women receiving similar salaries, whereas many companies actually employed many more men than women, Scottish Equitable said.

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# Recession shrinks the army of people who donate to charity

Liz Dolan and Nicola Cole show how to give if the season of good will should rekindle the urge to contribute

A STEEP decline in charitable giving during the recession has coincided with a sharp rise in demand for charitable aid, both at home and overseas. The Charities Aid Foundation, which acts as a central collection agency for charities, reports that the total given by individuals has been falling for the past few years, but the decline appears to have intensified recently. The traditional seasonal upturn in charitable donations therefore will be even more welcome than usual this year.

People who cannot afford to give to charity and buy Christmas presents can now do the next best thing by using the CAF's new charity gift vouchers. These operate in the same way as conventional gift vouchers, and allow recipients to donate the value of the voucher to the charity of their choice.

Those who can still afford to give directly to charity should do so as tax efficiently as possible. There are various methods available, including deeds of covenant, Gift Aid and special payroll giving schemes operated by employers. Deeds of covenant allow charities to reclaim basic rate tax on contributions, which must be made at regular intervals for at least four years. This obligation may act as a deterrent to people who are worried about income security. The CAF says many charities agree to cancel deeds



of covenant when the signatories fall on hard times, but this concession cannot be relied on. Substantial one-off donations attract tax relief if they are made via the Gift Aid scheme. However, these must be worth at least £400. Requests to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to abolish this minimum have so far fallen on deaf ears.

Gift Aid and deeds of covenant can only be used for payments to a single charity, unless the money is channelled through a voucher scheme, such as the CAF's charity account. Account-holders are issued with a book of vouchers that may then be distributed to a number of charities, with the tax being reclaimed by the CAF.

Employees who subscribe to a payroll contribution scheme

agree to have a certain amount deducted each month from their pre-tax salaries. This method of collection is both cheap and effective, but many companies either cannot be bothered to offer it to the workforce, or are ignorant of its existence. There are a number of such schemes, the largest of which is the CAF's Give As You Earn (GAYE) scheme, with one-third of the market.

Job losses and company failures have contributed to a decline in the number of people who give in this way. The CAF calculates that GAYE subscribers have fallen from 134,000 to 100,000 over the past year. Nearly one-third of GAYE's receipts come from just over 4 per cent of the membership, each donating £40 a month. However, the

total amount received has risen as a result of the current GAYE publicity campaign, spearheaded by the Reader's Digest, and backed by a number of companies, including British Telecom and Mori. This initiative is on target to more than double GAYE's annual income to £25 million by next June, says David Wickert, the CAF's services company director.

The Work Aid scheme, run by the Charities Trust, based in Liverpool, has suffered a 10 per cent decline in subscribers to just over 80,000 over the same period, although the amount given has risen to more than £2 million, compared with £1.7 million in 1991. Subscribers' donations average £3.80 a month. Regular contributions can be topped up by one-off pay-

ments. The Charities Trust reports that use of its voucher scheme for payroll giving goes up 20 per cent at this time of year. About 6,000 charities benefit from the various payroll schemes. The most popular are the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, Save the Children, Oxfam (whose own payroll giving unit brings in £500,000 annually), the Imperial Cancer Research Fund and the Cancer Research Campaign. More than 800 organisations offer payment facilities to staff, including the government, the BBC, Royal Mail and local authorities.

Dr Barnardo's manages its own scheme. Other payroll contribution agencies include the South West Giving Association and the Motor Traders' Benevolent Fund.

Charities maintain that receipts would benefit substantially if the government agreed to make a number of changes. They want the Chancellor to abolish, or at least increase substantially, the present £600 ceiling on tax-free payroll donations, and to force all employers to offer staff the opportunity to give in this way.

They also want the government to devise a similar scheme for the self-employed.

A new publication by John Harrison, of Investment and Tax Publishing Services (ITPS), offers guidance on all aspects of tax-efficient giving. *The Outline Guide to Charitable Giving and to Establishing Charitable Gift Trusts* covers a wide spectrum including the effects of independent taxation of husband and wife and disaster funds. The book is rather confusingly written and is aimed at the serious donor willing to pay the not-inconsiderable price of £40 (£48 after January 8). ITPS may be contacted at 0234 218740.



Window of opportunity: Derek Wanless, of NatWest, says allegations are misplaced

## Banks are 'helping small firms survive'

BANKS again came under fire this week for their treatment of small business customers as chief executives were questioned by the Chancellor about whether base rate cuts had been passed on in full (Karen Woolfson writes).

However, banks reject criticism of their actions and say they have been made scapegoats for the problems small businesses face during the recession. Derek Wanless, chief executive of National Westminster Bank, told the Chancellor that the vast majority of allegations about treatment of small businesses were unsubstantiated and misplaced.

The Federation of Small Businesses said that 75,000 businesses were expected to have gone under by the end of 1992. Stephen Alabritis, the federation's parliamentary officer, said it was not likely to get significantly worse in 1993 to 1994 as businesses were likely to be given more leeway and that more businesses had failed because of the recession than had treatment by their banks. Despite this, said Mr Alabritis, "bank managers have been too quick to pull the rug. More than 30 per cent of businesses

are savable." A survey from Barclays Small Business gives the opposite view, claiming that small business closures are on the decline. This is largely due to the banks supporting them through the recession, says the survey.

In return, the banks expect regular updates from businesses, including projections and cash flows, that can be time-consuming for a small firm to prepare, but can be its key to survival.

David Lavarack, head of Barclays small business services, said: "Small businesses don't want to damage the relationship with the customer, but while large companies are sitting on bills which give them cash flow, the smaller companies are running up overdrafts." The CBI has just introduced a Prompt Payment Code, including a list of about 400 institutions that have committed themselves to making payments on time. This may help solve the problem.

Mr Lavarack advises small businesses to contact their bank as soon as they start to get into difficulties. Warning signs include the development of "hardcore" borrowing on a short-term overdraft facility which pushes the balance

further into the red each month.

The government will pay up to two-thirds of the cost of a consultant. Application forms can be obtained from the Department of Trade and Industry as part of the Enterprise Initiative and the response takes between four to ten weeks.

Midland offers advice on how to reduce costs, sell unused machinery, reduce stock levels and staff, find new markets, restructure finance and obtain a capital moratorium so that only interest has to be paid on a loan for a fixed period. Midland will provide loans according to how much the owner has put into the business. Arrangement fees for loans are typically 1.25 per cent.

NatWest and Lloyds can also bridge the gap with loans and overdrafts. Eric Swindonbank, manager of NatWest small business services, said: "Keeping close to the customer, understanding the customer's problems and being sympathetic are crucial, but above all the business must be viable." Lloyds puts companies in touch with suitable contacts abroad for the price of a telex.

## CU cuts bonus rates

COMMERCIAL Union this week became the first life office to announce lower bonus rates for policies maturing in 1993 (Sara McConnell writes). It has cut rates across the board on traditional ten and 25-year policies by half a percentage point.

Total new bonuses on life policies are 6.5 per cent, down from 7 per cent, while new bonuses on pension policies are 7 per cent, down from 7.5 per cent. Bonuses on unissued with-profits life policies will fall by 1 per cent. Other

offices are widely expected to announce deeper cuts early in the new year, particularly on ten-year policies because of poor investment performance. The payout on a £30 a month 10-year endowment policy will be £7,164 after January 1, instead of £7,484 this year. The new payout on a 25-year endowment with the same monthly premium will now be £62,941 instead of £65,596. The terminal bonus included in this payout is 18.4 per cent of the total on a 10-year policy and 28.6 per cent on a 25-year policy.

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## PEP M&G DIVIDEND PERFORMANCE SINCE LAUNCH

Year Ended 31st Dec	\$5,000 Lump Sum*			\$50 per month		
	M&G Dividend Net	M&G Dividend Gross	Gross Building Society	Amount Invested	M&G Dividend Net	M&G Dividend Gross
6.5.1964	£6,000	£6,000	£6,000	£50	£50	£50
1964	5,796	5,796	6,230	350	319	357
1965	6,304	6,304	6,833	950	974	1,001
1966	6,120	6,360	7,094	1,550	1,486	1,693
1967	7,224	7,728	8,610	2,150	2,331	2,439
1968	9,900	10,872	11,887	2,750	3,866	4,087
1969	8,256	9,252	8,872	3,350	3,786	4,022
1970	8,376	9,636	9,634	3,950	4,411	4,784
1971	12,696	15,036	10,437	4,550	7,452	8,236
1972	15,696	18,960	11,286	5,150	9,839	11,017
1973	11,832	14,496	12,395	5,750	7,869	8,878
1974	7,224	9,036	13,810	6,350	5,225	5,956
1975	16,164	20,760	15,373	6,950	12,446	14,446
1976	15,540	20,436	17,078	7,550	12,512	14,770
1977	24,696	33,288	18,939	8,150	20,959	24,739
1978	27,396	37,812	20,817	8,750	23,390	28,688
1979	28,476	40,176	23,434	9,350	24,848	31,022
1980	32,436	46,836	27,023	9,950	28,864	36,727
1981	37,464	55,488	30,688	10,550	33,929	44,107
1982	45,672	67,288	34,667	11,150	41,981	55,699
1983	65,964	102,180	38,562	11,750	61,304	82,815
1984	90,504	142,368	42,722	12,350	84,781	116,061
1985	112,968	180,180	48,189	12,950	106,466	147,530
1986	152,352	245,892	53,615	13,550	144,214	201,966
1987	184,248	300,696	59,392	14,150	174,961	247,537
1988	208,160	335,220	65,131	14,750	193,310	276,549
1989	257,076	428,544	73,382	15,350	245,483	354,160
1990	218,640	368,880	84,046	15,950	209,307	305,580
1991	226,320	387,120	93,554	16,550	217,187	321,009
30.11.1992	268,320	466,560	101,493*	17,100	258,064	387,458

Notes: The values shown have been calculated as if an M&G PEP and its current tax treatment were available throughout the period shown. The value to you of the tax benefits will depend on your own circumstances. The tax regime of PEPs could change in the future. All figures include the M&G Dividend figures shown the return to the investor. The Building Society figures are based on the average rate of a Building Society Share Account (Source: Central Statistical Office). The regular savings figures exclude the last payment and all payments apart from the first are made on the last business day of the month. An investment in M&G Dividend of £5,000 on 30th November, 1967 would be worth £3,238 November, 1987 (£3,000) would be worth £3,345 by 30th November, 1992 with net income re-invested. An investment of £50 per month from 30th November, 1967 would be worth £2,345 by 30th November, 1992 with net income re-invested and £3,461 with gross income re-invested. \*Estimated using current interest rate levels. Past performance is not necessarily a guide to future performance. The price of units and the income from them may go down as well as up. You may get back less than you invested.

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## Societies slow to back debt advice plan

By Sara McConnell

SOME major building societies are holding back from giving their support to a new debt counselling service due to start next spring because they say they provide such a service themselves for borrowers, as well as committing funds to Citizens Advice Bureaux and other money advice networks.

Demand for money advice counselling far outstrips supply, said the Council of Mortgage Lenders in its monthly newsletter out yesterday. However, it said: "There are very wide ranging differences in the way that mortgage lenders undertake their business... many lenders will continue to take the view that they are best placed to help solve the problems of their customers." The Woolwich and the Alliance & Leicester, the third and fourth largest building societies, said they did not attend meetings of banks, building societies, credit card companies, finance houses and utility companies held this week to gather support for the Consumer Credit Counselling Service.

The Halifax, the largest society, said it had attended the meeting and would be interested to see how it devel-

oped. Abbey National, the second largest lender, attended but said the scheme needed a lot of close consideration.

The service will start next spring with a pilot scheme in Leeds. A network of 22 centres is planned, of which four will be in the London area and two in the Birmingham area. Eight counsellors and a unit manager have been recruited for the Leeds operation. It will provide free counselling and education for people in debt and arrange debt management programmes in which clients agree to make a fixed payment each month.

The Foundation for Credit Counselling, which is running the scheme, said it needed creditors to co-operate with counsellors and treat proposals for payment sympathetically. Creditors will also be expected to rebate 15 per cent of the money they get back from clients to the service to cover costs. To tempt the building societies, which are some of the country's largest creditors, the foundation proposes a smaller fee of £100 per case per year.

However, building societies are not convinced. The Woolwich said it was already donating



Helping hand: Geeta Varma will be assisting with the counselling of people in debt in Leeds

ing £50,000 a year to the Money Advice Trust, a charity set up to channel private sector funds into money advice projects. It was helping Citizens Advice Bureaux in the South East, where most of the society's branches are based, and it also counselled people in difficulties through its branches. The Alliance & Leicester said it received "half a dozen letters a week" from people proposing money advice initiatives. "It would have to be something special for us to get involved," it said. The society counsels people in its branches, but mainly on mortgage arrears rather than multiple debt.

Malcolm Hurston, chairman of the Foundation for

Credit Counselling, said: "We have had a series of discussions with the building societies and we hope that in cases where a mortgage is part of a complex debt problem, some sort of fair share may be paid by the building societies." He added: "We expect to have to earn our spurs." The Leeds Permanent is the only society so far to sponsor the Leeds pilot scheme, with £30,000.

Barclaycard is the biggest sponsor of the Consumer Credit Counselling Service with a £100,000 donation. Other sponsors include GE Capital, provider of store cards (£70,000), the Registry Trust (£50,000), Equifax and CCN, credit reference agencies, (£30,000 each).

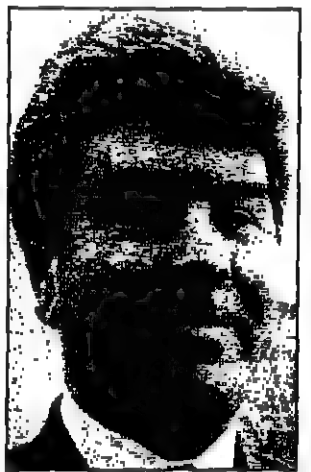
## Small may be beautiful again

By Rupert Bruce

FOLLOWERS of shares in Britain's smaller companies have sighted a fresh dawn. They think that these shares, and the unit trusts and investment trusts that invest in them, may be on the brink of offering impressive returns again after years of disappointment.

The fortunes of smaller companies are much more dependent on the health of the British economy than larger ones because they have less overseas trade. They are also more volatile and many smaller companies have suffered badly in a recession. Today's cautious optimism is closely linked to hopes that the economy is on the turn.

John Houlihan, senior smaller companies analyst at Hoare Govett, believes the recession should end next year. He said: "I think the fundamentals argue for outperformance (by smaller companies) next year... I do not think we are talking about much growth for 1993 in a macro sense, but even given that, I think there will be an improvement because of the cost-cutting that has been going on." A pick-up in the



Houlihan: Improvement

prices of shares in smaller companies is the most visible sign of optimism. In the month of November alone, the price of the Hoare Govett Smaller Companies Index — the standard yardstick for the bottom tenth of the UK stock market by value — rose by more than 2 per cent.

And when the Hoare Govett Smaller Companies Index Investment Trust, a new investment trust designed to match broadly the performance of the index, started trading last Monday, it did so at a premi-

um to the value of its underlying assets. But is this another false dawn?

David Warnock, a partner at Aberforth Partners that specialises in British smaller companies and manages two investment trusts and a unit trust, said: "This current modest hope that things will be better next year, probably has more basis in reality than the previous perceptions that recovery was on its way, because interest rates are lower."

Mr Warnock thinks crunch time will come in March, at the time of 1992 results announcements. Aberforth Partners' recent visits to companies have indicated only that trading is not getting any worse.

But even that is an improvement. During the last four years of high interest rates the fortunes of smaller companies have dwindled and the Hoare Govett Smaller Companies Index has performed poorly. The worst year was 1990 when base rates averaged close to 15 per cent and the smaller companies index fell by more than 25 per cent. In the United States, shares of smaller companies went through a similar period of bad performance in the years leading up to 1991, but have

outperformed larger companies since. Ed Cimilucka, a smaller companies analyst at Shearson Lehman in New York, said the catalysts for outperformance were lower interest rates and excessively expensive price-tags on larger shares.

Here, those conditions are falling into place. But it is too early to be sure of recovery. Anthony Simonian, managing director of Moorgate Investment Management, that runs two smaller companies investment trusts, thinks that smaller companies will outperform larger ones over the next two or three years. The next six months are less predictable. Historically, long-term investments in British smaller companies shares have paid off. From 1955 to 1991, the Hoare Govett Smaller Companies Index, (with gross dividends reinvested), gave an average annual return of 18 per cent. It outperformed the FT-All Share Index by an average of 4.4 per cent each year.

We would like to apologise to readers for the absence of the Interest Rates Roundup table this week. It has been held over due to lack of space.

### Disillusionment has set in over my Midland Bank Pep

From A. A. Sorrell

Sir, I wonder if many of your readers are as disillusioned with Peps as I am?

In 1987 I bought shares in Midland Bank in a Pep with a Midland subsidiary. When I checked in 1991 I found that the administration fees since the Pep started almost exactly matched the tax reclaimed on dividends. My broker suggested transferring the Pep to a manager with lower fees, but the "setting up" charge would have cancelled the gain for several years. In 1992 Midland reduced its dividend, but were, of course, taken over by HSBC which resulted in the value of the holding (on which the fees are based) shooting up. The result was that in the year to October, 1992 the amount of income tax recovered was £7.60, but administration fees were £72.26.

I know that capital gains on Peps are free of tax, but I imagine that the great majority of Pep holders do not exceed the tax-free ceiling of £5,500. So is it worth it? Yours faithfully, A. A. SORRELL, Ranelagh, Stewarts Road, Week St Mary, Holsworthy, Devon.



Be brave, go to see your bank manager

From Mrs Margaret Smith  
Sir, in view of all the bad publicity recently regarding the way the banks are treating some of their customers, could I please ask you to put on record my experience with the Sidmouth branch of the National Westminster Bank I am a widow, with just a pension and a little income support. I got into great difficulties with my finances, not being able to manage my affairs at all. I approached the manager of Sidmouth branch, and, together with the help of other staff, they have put me on an even keel, and I can now pay my creditors weekly with a happy heart, knowing full well

if I have any more worries I only have to pick up the phone for assistance. This proves that it is better to be brave enough to go to your bank when in difficulties with money, and not wait and hope things will go right on their own. They don't, you need advice from the experts. Perhaps I was lucky and I do advise people in circumstances like mine to do something about it. Perhaps the NatWest is special, I think so.

I remain, Yours faithfully, MARGARET E. J. SMITH, Sidmouth, Devon.

### Pin money for thieves

From Dr Henry Campbell Drysdale  
Sir, I suspect that you may receive more than one letter echoing the sentiments of Mr Fremlin about the ability of thieves to breach the PIN code.

In our case two cards were stolen and used locally within a few hours to ransom my wife's and the household account. When apprehended — by courtesy of a video camera at one bank — the thieves claimed that they found in my wife's handbag a piece of paper with the two PIN numbers.

Quite apart from the fact that my wife never committed the figures to paper, the idea that it is possible to find in her handbag anything of even remote relevance at any time, let alone in the dark during the small hours of the morning, is palpably ludicrous. The bank seems, convinced that the thieves are truthful and we are liars.

Yours faithfully, HENRY CAMPBELL DRYSDALE, Civilian Consultant, Pathologist, RAF Institute of Pathology & Tropical Medicine, Halton, Aylesbury, Bucks.

Letters to The Times Business and Finance section can be sent by fax on 071-782 5112.

### It all seems too hard on our parliamentary draftsmen

From Mr Shaun W. Thorpe  
Sir, Mr Hart seems rather hard on parliamentary draftsmen when he proposes (Letters, Weekend Money, December 5) to surcharge them for litigation arising from ambiguous legislation. If it were possible to draft legislation without ambigu-

ities we would presumably not have needed the courts to interpret them for several centuries (though they should have had recourse to Hansard long before this). And as the two Houses of Parliament usually have ample opportunity to examine and amend Bills, if legislation fails, as in

Mr Hart's case, to reflect the wishes of Parliament, is it the draftsmen's fault or Parliament's?

Yours faithfully, SHAUN W. THORPE, 53 Willow Vale, Shepherds Bush, W12.

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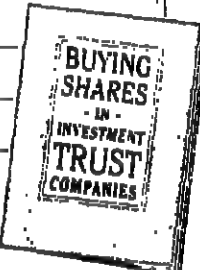
THE ASSOCIATION OF INVESTMENT TRUST COMPANIES

To Ian Cox, Association of Investment Trust Companies, Park House, 6th Floor, 16 Finsbury Circus, London EC2M 7JJ.

Please send me a free information pack. ☐ I am a private investor ☐ I am an independent financial adviser

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Please note that the value of and the income from shares may fall and you may not get back the amount you have invested. This advertisement has been approved by AITC Services Limited. (10/92)



## We haven't survived past recessions. We've beaten them.

FOREIGN & COLONIAL INVESTMENT TRUST PLC

£1,000 INVESTED ON 31 DEC '45

HAD GROWN TO £15,607 BY '74 RECESSION

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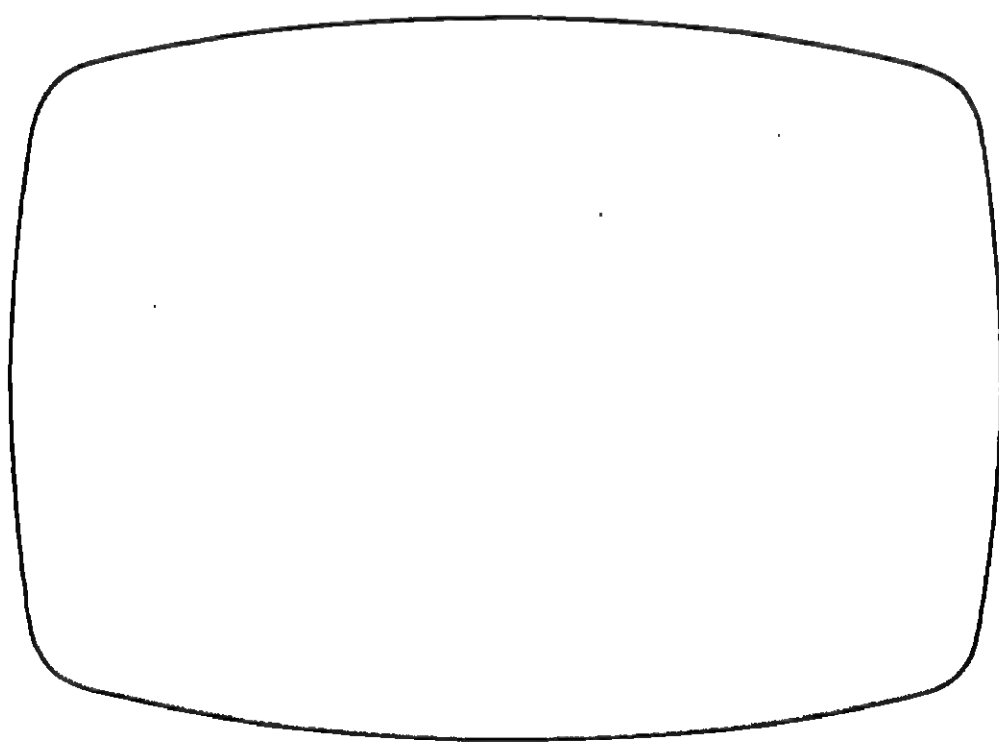
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For a copy of our Private Investor Plan brochure and application form, and the coupon to Foreign & Colonial Management Limited, PO Box 2, Tisbury, Wiltshire RG10 9NN  
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\*Source: Mirostat to 30.9.92. Figures are based on total return, net income reinvested. \*\*Calculation by Foreign & Colonial Management Ltd using mid-market prices, net income reinvested up to 30.9.92, includes historical 3.5% annual expenses. Current charges are 0.2% commission and 0.5% Government stamp duty (minimum 50p). Foreign & Colonial Management Ltd is Manager of the Foreign & Colonial Investment Trusts and a member of IMRO. The value of shares can fall as well as rise and investors may not get back the amount invested. Past performance is no guide to the future.



# What shape will your advertising budget be in next year?



Instead of blowing all your money on the box in the New Year, consider the rectangular alternative.

For the average cost of just making a commercial these days, you could run a national campaign of full page newspaper advertisements.

The press gives you the freedom to change your advertising at short notice. Television doesn't.

The press gives you space to go into detail about your product. With just enough room for about 60

words in a 30 second commercial, television doesn't. (This paragraph alone would take nearly 20 seconds to broadcast.)

You can also pin point the people you wish to talk to with greater accuracy than you can on television, making sure your money is spent where it can do the most good.

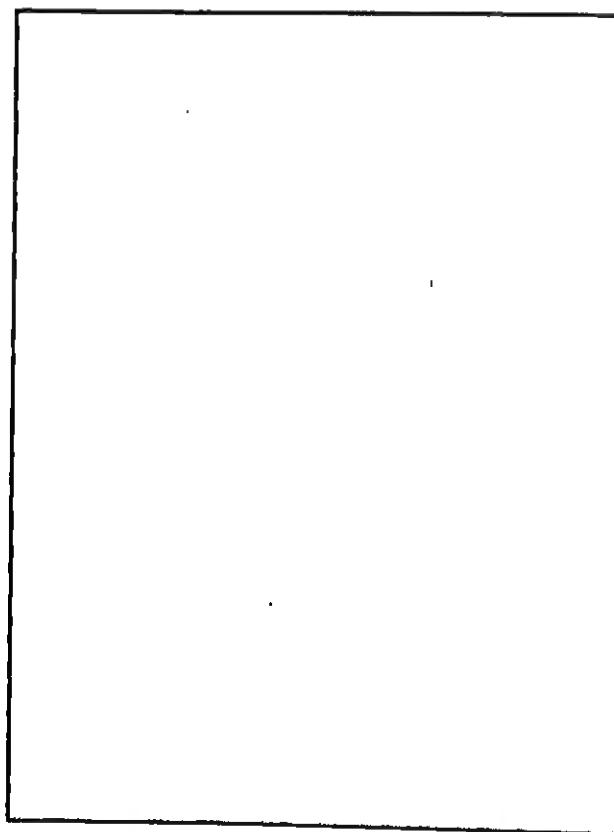
Whereas the mind-boggling choice of channels now available thanks to satellite and cable, makes

viewing habits extremely unpredictable and encourages zapping; every TV advertiser's nightmare.

Let's face it, the only thing you can be certain of with TV is, if the ads are on, so are a lot of kettles.

If you want to be sure of reaching your audience on TV, you need to reach for a very fat wallet. So if you want your advertising budget in good shape for '93, put it in the shape on the right, above.

**USE THE  
POWER  
OF THE  
PRESS**





## Christmas spending spree

**© Times Newspapers Limited**  
**DIVIDEND £2,000**  
Claims required for +64 points

[illegible]

Wino	374	0.4	18.0	6.4	13.9
Bozart End	24		7.0	4.6	
Bradford	144	0.3	4.4	4.1	13.1
Byrdon	12				1.1

Mr Land	192	...	6.3	47	18.9
Brinson	161	...	8.1	2.3	12.3
Burford	45	...	0.9	2.8	21.5
Cap & Regalia	92	...	...	1.4	...
Cordell Prop	151	...	...	1.7	54.0
Chesterfield	193	...	18.5	13.0	...
City Site Exp	25	...	0.3	...	...
Clarke-McIntire	127	...	1.4	...	2.0
Clayton	10	...	...	...	...
Devian	818	...	25.0	41	12.9
Dares Estates	14	...	...	...	...
Debenham Town	35	...	2.6	6.1	21.0

De Morgan	4	..	...	...
Denzon	78	..	3.5	84 ..
Durwest Hidge	288	- 3	8.0	41 34 1
Estates Agency	121	...	...	3.0 25.1
Estates Co	26	...	3.7	8.2

10	Brass Of Leves	139	+ 8	4.1	4.0	13.3
14	Pine Oaks	14	...	...	...	...
15	Plumchir King	30	...	1.0	4.4	18.5
18	Propagator	280	+ 3	13.0	7.1	14.6
11	Geinger	94	+ 1	8.2	7.4	...
14	Gr Portland	126	+ 9	10.0	10.6	12.5
15	Chrysalis	10	+ 1	5.2	...	...
13	McC Land	91 1/2	- 3 1/2	...	3.5	15.4

Hampton Club	26	20	10	10	10
Harvard	30	20	10	10	10
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Harvard '10	20	20	10	10	10
Harvard '11	20	20	10	10	10
Harvard '12	20	20	10	10	10

9 Automatic	13	...	...	...	...
12 Headlamp	91	...	2.4	3.5	36.0
15 Lambert	300	...	12.6	8.1	8.6

Picard & Garber	04	- 1	1.3	3.1	6.3
Strong & Fisher	19	...	1.0	7.0	3.3
Stylin	08	...	2.5	1.8	...

## TEXTILES

[illegible]

**TOBACCOS**

EAT	985	012	11.6	4.5	28.0
0 ROLLING "B"	851	021	10.2	2.1	14.9

## TRANSPORT

[illegible]

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THE TIMES UNIT TRUST INFORMATION SERVICE

[illegible][illegible]

-1.30	1.40	1.50	1.60	1.70	1.80	1.90	2.00	2.10	2.20	2.30	2.40	2.50	2.60	2.70	2.80	2.90	3.00	3.10	3.20	3.30	3.40	3.50	3.60	3.70	3.80	3.90	4.00	4.10	4.20	4.30	4.40	4.50	4.60	4.70	4.80	4.90	5.00	5.10	5.20	5.30	5.40	5.50	5.60	5.70	5.80	5.90	6.00	6.10	6.20	6.30	6.40	6.50	6.60	6.70	6.80	6.90	7.00	7.10	7.20	7.30	7.40	7.50	7.60	7.70	7.80	7.90	8.00	8.10	8.20	8.30	8.40	8.50	8.60	8.70	8.80	8.90	9.00	9.10	9.20	9.30	9.40	9.50	9.60	9.70	9.80	9.90	10.00	10.10	10.20	10.30	10.40	10.50	10.60	10.70	10.80	10.90	11.00	11.10	11.20	11.30	11.40	11.50	11.60	11.70	11.80	11.90	12.00	12.10	12.20	12.30	12.40	12.50	12.60	12.70	12.80	12.90	13.00	13.10	13.20	13.30	13.40	13.50	13.60	13.70	13.80	13.90	14.00	14.10	14.20	14.30	14.40	14.50	14.60	14.70	14.80	14.90	15.00	15.10	15.20	15.30	15.40	15.50	15.60	15.70	15.80	15.90	16.00	16.10	16.20	16.30	16.40	16.50	16.60	16.70	16.80	16.90	17.00	17.10	17.20	17.30	17.40	17.50	17.60	17.70	17.80	17.90	18.00	18.10	18.20	18.30	18.40	18.50	18.60	18.70	18.80	18.90	19.00	19.10	19.20	19.30	19.40	19.50	19.60	19.70	19.80	19.90	20.00	20.10	20.20	20.30	20.40	20.50	20.60	20.70	20.80	20.90	21.00	21.10	21.20	21.30	21.40	21.50	21.60	21.70	21.80	21.90	22.00	22.10	22.20	22.30	22.40	22.50	22.60	22.70	22.80	22.90	23.00	23.10	23.20	23.30	23.40	23.50	23.60	23.70	23.80	23.90	24.00	24.10	24.20	24.30	24.40	24.50	24.60	24.70	24.80	24.90	25.00	25.10	25.20	25.30	25.40	25.50	25.60	25.70	25.80	25.90	26.00	26.10	26.20	26.30	26.40	26.50	26.60	26.70	26.80	26.90	27.00	27.10	27.20	27.30	27.40	27.50	27.60	27.70	27.80	27.90	28.00	28.10	28.20	28.30	28.40	28.50	28.60	28.70	28.80	28.90	29.00	29.10	29.20	29.30	29.40	29.50	29.60	29.70	29.80	29.90	30.00	30.10	30.20	30.30	30.40	30.50	30.60	30.70	30.80	30.90	31.00	31.10	31.20	31.30	31.40	31.50	31.60	31.70	31.80	31.90	32.00	32.10	32.20	32.30	32.40	32.50	32.60	32.70	32.80	32.90	33.00	33.10	33.20	33.30	33.40	33.50	33.60	33.70	33.80	33.90	34.00	34.10	34.20	34.30	34.40	34.50	34.60	34.70	34.80	34.90	35.00	35.10	35.20	35.30	35.40	35.50	35.60	35.70	35.80	35.90	36.00	36.10	36.20	36.30	36.40	36.50	36.60	36.70	36.80	36.90	37.00	37.10	37.20	37.30	37.40	37.50	37.60	37.70	37.80	37.90	38.00	38.10	38.20	38.30	38.40	38.50	38.60	38.70	38.80	38.90	39.00	39.10	39.20	39.30	39.40	39.50	39.60	39.70	39.80	39.90	40.00	40.10	40.20	40.30	40.40	40.50	40.60	40.70	40.80	40.90	41.00	41.10	41.20	41.30	41.40	41.50	41.60	41.70	41.80	41.90	42.00	42.10	42.20	42.30	42.40	42.50	42.60	42.70	42.80	42.90	43.00	43.10	43.20	43.30	43.40	43.50	43.60	43.70	43.80	43.90	44.00	44.10	44.20	44.30	44.40	44.50	44.60	44.70	44.80	44.90	45.00	45.10	45.20	45.30	45.40	45.50	45.60	45.70	45.80	45.90	46.00	46.10	46.20	46.30	46.40	46.50	46.60	46.70	46.80	46.90	47.00	47.10	47.20	47.30	47.40	47.50	47.60	47.70	47.80	47.90	48.00	48.10	48.20	48.30	48.40	48.50	48.60	48.70	48.80	48.90	49.00	49.10	49.20	49.30	49.40	49.50	49.60	49.70	49.80	49.90	50.00	50.10	50.20	50.30	50.40	50.50	50.60	50.70	50.80	50.90	51.00	51.10	51.20	51.30	51.40	51.50	51.60	51.70	51.80	51.90	52.00	52.10	52.20	52.30	52.40	52.50	52.60	52.70	52.80	52.90	53.00	53.10	53.20	53.30	53.40	53.50	53.60	53.70	53.80	53.90	54.00	54.10	54.20	54.30	54.40	54.50	54.60	54.70	54.80	54.90	55.00	55.10	55.20	55.30	55.40	55.50	55.60	55.70	55.80	55.90	56.00	56.10	56.20	56.30	56.40	56.50	56.60	56.70	56.80	56.90	57.00	57.10	57.20	57.30	57.40	57.50	57.60	57.70	57.80	57.90	58.00	58.10	58.20	58.30	58.40	58.50	58.60	58.70	58.80	58.90	59.00	59.10	59.20	59.30	59.40	59.50	59.60	59.70	59.80	59.90	60.00	60.10	60.20	60.30	60.40	60.50	60.60	60.70	60.80	60.90	61.00	61.10	61.20	61.30	61.40	61.50	61.60	61.70	61.80	61.90	62.00	62.10	62.20	62.30	62.40	62.50	62.60	62.70	62.80	62.90	63.00	63.10	63.20	63.30	63.40	63.50	63.60	63.70	63.80	63.90	64.00	64.10	64.20	64.30	64.40	64.50	64.60	64.70	64.80	64.90	65.00	65.10	65.20	65.30	65.40	65.50	65.60	65.70	65.80	65.90	66.00	66.10	66.20	66.30	66.40	66.50	66.60	66.70	66.80	66.90	67.00	67.10	67.20	67.30	67.40	67.50	67.60	67.70	67.80	67.90	68.00	68.10	68.20	68.30	68.40	68.50	68.60	68.70	68.80	68.90	69.00	69.10	69.20	69.30	69.40	69.50	69.60	69.70	69.80	69.90	70.00	70.10	70.20	70.30	70.40	70.50	70.60	70.70	70.80	70.90	71.00	71.10	71.20	71.30	71.40	71.50	71.60	71.70	71.80	71.90	72.00	72.10	72.20	72.30	72.40	72.50	72.60	72.70	72.80	72.90	73.00	73.10	73.20	73.30	73.40	73.50	73.60	73.70	73.80	73.90	74.00	74.10	74.20	74.30	74.40	74.50	74.60	74.70	74.80	74.90	75.00	75.10	75.20	75.30	75.40	75.50	75.60	75.70	75.80	75.90	76.00	76.10	76.20	76.30	76.40	76.50	76.60	76.70	76.80	76.90	77.00	77.10	77.20	77.30	77.40	77.50	77.60	77.70	77.80	77.90	78.00	78.10	78.20	78.30	78.40	78.50	78.60	78.70	78.80	78.90	79.00	79.10	79.20	79.30	79.40	79.50	79.60	79.70	79.80	79.90	80.00	80.10	80.20	80.30	80.40	80.50	80.60	80.70	80.80	80.90	81.00	81.10	81.20	81.30	81.40	81.50	81.60	81.70	81.80	81.90	82.00	82.10	82.20	82.30	82.40	82.50	82.60	82.70	82.80	82.90	83.00	83.10	83.20	83.30	83.40	83.50	83.60	83.70	83.80	83.90	84.00	84.10	84.20	84.30	84.40	84.50	84.60	84.70	84.80	84.90	85.00	85.10	85.20	85.30	85.40	85.50	85.60	85.70	85.80	85.90	86.00	86.10	86.20	86.30	86.40	86.50	86.60	86.70	86.80	86.90	87.00	87.10	87.20	87.30	87.40	87.50	87.60	87.70	87.80	87.90	88.00	88.10	88.20	88.30	88.40	88.50	88.60	88.70	88.80	88.90	89.00	89.10	89.20	89.30	89.40	89.50	89.60	89.70	89.80	89.90	90.00	90.10	90.20	90.30	90.40	90.50	90.60	90.70	90.80	90.90	91.00	91.10	91.20	91.30	91.40	91.50	91.60	91.70	91.80	91.90	92.00	92.10	92.20	92.30	92.40	92.50	92.60	92.70	92.80	92.90	93.00	93.10	93.20	93.30	93.40	93.50	93.60	93.70	93.80	93.90	94.00	94.10	94.20	94.30	94.40	94.50	94.60	94.70	94.80	94.90	95.00	95.10	95.20	95.30	95.40	95.50	95.60	95.70	95.80	95.90	96.00	96.10	96.20	96.30	96.40	96.50	96.60	96.70	96.80	96.90	97.00	97.10	97.20	97.30	97.40	97.50	97.60	97.70	97.80	97.90	98.00	98.10	98.20	98.30	98.40	98.50	98.60	98.70	98.80	98.90	99.00	99.10	99.20	99.30	99.40	99.50	99.60	99.70	99.80	99.90	100.00
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0.52	0.04	-50-Jac	70.58	68.76	- 0.23	0.08	Fluor	32.75	33.00	0.25	0.07
0.50	0.03	-50-Jac	70.58	68.76	- 0.23	0.08	General Corp	32.75	33.00	0.25	0.07
0.102	...	-50-Jac	117.25	122.50	+ 0.70	1.68	Rockwell	78.48	83.06	+ 4.58	2.69
0.138	0.02	Thyco	77.94	84.54	+ 1.00	...	Gold Corp Int	102.20	112.50	+ 10.30	5.16
0.138	0.02	-50-Jac	117.25	122.50	+ 0.70	1.68	Int'l	67.50	67.50	0.00	0.11
0.138	0.02	UK Equity	148.92	152.50	+ 0.67	3.10	Int'l	105.20	112.50	+ 7.30	3.49
0.138	0.02	-50-Jac	117.25	122.50	+ 0.70	1.68	Int'l	124.00	124.00	0.00	0.11
0.137	...	UK Equity	148.92	152.50	+ 0.67	3.10	Int'l	105.20	112.50	+ 7.30	3.49
0.137	...	-50-Jac	117.25	122.50	+ 0.70	1.68	Int'l	124.00	124.00	0.00	0.11
0.137	...	UK Equity	148.92	152.50	+ 0.67	3.10	Int'l	105.20	112.50	+ 7.30	3.49
0.137	...	-50-Jac	117.25	122.50	+ 0.70	1.68	Int'l	124.00	124.00	0.00	0.11
0.137	...	UK Equity	148.92	152.50	+ 0.67	3.10	Int'l	105.20	112.50	+ 7.30	3.49
0.137	...	-50-Jac	117.25	122.50	+ 0.70	1.68	Int'l	124.00	124.00	0.00	0.11
0.137	...	UK Equity	148.92	152.50	+ 0.67	3.10	Int'l	105.20	112.50	+ 7.30	3.49
0.137	...	-50-Jac	117.25	122.50	+ 0.70	1.68	Int'l	124.00	124.00	0.00	0.11
0.137	...	UK Equity	148.92	152.50	+ 0.67	3.10	Int'l	105.20	112.50	+ 7.30	3.49
0.137	...	-50-Jac	117.25	122.50	+ 0.70	1.68	Int'l	124.00	124.00	0.00	0.11
0.137	...	UK Equity	148.92	152.50	+ 0.67	3.10	Int'l	105.20	112.50	+ 7.30	3.49
0.137	...	-50-Jac	117.25	122.50	+ 0.70	1.68	Int'l	124.00	124.00	0.00	0.11
0.137	...	UK Equity	148.92	152.50	+ 0.67	3.10	Int'l	105.20	112.50	+ 7.30	3.49
0.137	...	-50-Jac	117.25	122.50	+ 0.70	1.68	Int'l	124.00	124.00	0.00	0.11
0.137	...	UK Equity	148.92	152.50	+ 0.67	3.10	Int'l	105.20	112.50	+ 7.30	3.49
0.137	...	-50-Jac	117.25	122.50	+ 0.70	1.68	Int'l	124.00	124.00	0.00	0.11
0.137	...	UK Equity	148.92	152.50	+ 0.67	3.10	Int'l	105.20	112.50	+ 7.30	3.49
0.137	...	-50-Jac	117.25	122.50	+ 0.70	1.68	Int'l	124.00	124.00	0.00	0.11
0.137	...	UK Equity	148.92	152.50	+ 0.67	3.10	Int'l	105.20	112.50	+ 7.30	3.49
0.137	...	-50-Jac	117.25	122.50	+ 0.70	1.68	Int'l	124.00	124.00	0.00	0.11
0.137	...	UK Equity	148.92	152.50	+ 0.67	3.10	Int'l	105.20	112.50	+ 7.30	3.49
0.137	...	-50-Jac	117.25	122.50	+ 0.70	1.68	Int'l	124.00	124.00	0.00	0.11
0.137	...	UK Equity	148.92	152.50	+ 0.67	3.10	Int'l	105.20	112.50	+ 7.30	3.49
0.137	...	-50-Jac	117.25	122.50	+ 0.70	1.68	Int'l	124.00	124.00	0.00	0.11
0.137	...	UK Equity	148.92	152.50	+ 0.67	3.10	Int'l	105.20	112.50	+ 7.30	3.49
0.137	...	-50-Jac	117.25	122.50	+ 0.70	1.68	Int'l	124.00	124.00	0.00	0.11
0.137	...	UK Equity	148.92	152.50	+ 0.67	3.10	Int'l	105.20	112.50	+ 7.30	3.49
0.137	...	-50-Jac	117.25	122.50	+ 0.70	1.68	Int'l	124.00	124.00	0.00	0.11
0.137	...	UK Equity	148.92	152.50	+ 0.67	3.10	Int'l	105.20	112.50	+ 7.30	3.49
0.137	...	-50-Jac	117.25	122.50	+ 0.70	1.68	Int'l	124.00	124.00	0.00	0.11
0.137	...	UK Equity	148.92	152.50	+ 0.67	3.10	Int'l	105.20	112.50	+ 7.30	3.49
0.137	...	-50-Jac	117.25	122.50	+ 0.70	1.68	Int'l	124.00	124.00	0.00	0.11
0.137	...	UK Equity	148.92	152.50	+ 0.67	3.10	Int'l	105.20	112.50	+ 7.30	3.49
0.137	...	-50-Jac	117.25	122.50	+ 0.70	1.68	Int'l	124.00	124.00	0.00	0.11
0.137	...	UK Equity	148.92	152.50	+ 0.67	3.10	Int'l	105.20	112.50	+ 7.30	3.49
0.137	...	-50-Jac	117.25	122.50	+ 0.70	1.68	Int'l	124.00	124.00	0.00	0.11
0.137	...	UK Equity	148.92	152.50	+ 0.67	3.10	Int'l	105.20	112.50	+ 7.30	3.49
0.137	...	-50-Jac	117.25	122.50	+ 0.70	1.68	Int'l	124.00	124.00	0.00	0.11
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4050	Malay	2101.00-2214.50	2101.00-2208.00	11-15ds	35-40ds
4050	Manila	1993.5-2000	1993.5-2000	0.07pcr	0.03-0.09ds
298 0	New York	1.5640-1.5705	1.5650-1.5660	0.5-4-53pr	1.5-4-53pr
	Oslo	10.5350-10.5800	10.5320-10.5350	4-5-5ds	12-13-3pr
	Paris	138.048-173	8.4580-8.4730	4-5-5ds	9-11-1pr
20991 2	Stockholm	10.8710-11.0160	10.8370-10.8610	4-5-5ds	11-12-3pr
	Tokyo	192.74-193	192.77-192.98	3-4pr	14-17pr
	Vietnam	1.23-17.31	17.24-17.31	17-21ds	4-7-1ds
134 185	Zurich	2009.2-2110	2.0043-2.2083	11-15ds	35-40ds
	Source: Eatal			Premium + pr. Discount - ds	

4731 294	<b>OTHER STEERING</b>		<b>DOLLAR SPOT RATES</b>	
2024 0	Argentina peso*	1.5483-1.5520	Australia	1.44631-1.4473
	Australian dollar	2.6642-2.674	Austria	2.1102-1.105
	Bahrain dinar	0.587-0.599	Belgium (Com)	2.52-2.532
	Brazil cruzeiro*	1.7830-1.7853	Canada	1.2730-1.2735
	Czech crown	0.724-0.734	Denmark	6.07-6.08
	Finland mark	8.9395-1.5585	France	6.7-6.78
	Greece drachma	34.4-35.4	Germany	1.56831-1.5693
	Hong Kong dollar	12.1014-12.1108	Hong Kong	7.7350-7.7360
	India rupee	42.96-43.10	Ireland	1.400-1.4090
	Kuwait dinar KD	0.467-0.477	Italy	1406-1407.0
	Laos kip	4.0413-4.0455	Japan	123.17-123.22
	Mexico peso	4.67-1.75	Malaysia	2.581-2.5825
	New Zealand dollar	3.0202-3.0263	Netherlands	1.7600-1.7610
	Saudi Arabia riyal	5.837-5.961	Norway	

40.30	S Africa rand (m)	7.4767-6.6893	Spain	140.30-140.60
-0.30	S Africa rand (com)	4.7096-4.7158	Spain	1.6395-1.6405
	U A E dirham	5.7155-5.8395	Sweden	11.00-11.50
	Barclays Bank GTS * Loyds Bank		Switzerland	6.5580-6.5680
			Switzerland	1.4132-1.4142

### MONEY RATES (%)

Base Rates: Clearing Banks 7 Finance Has 8  
 Discount Market Lenders Overnight high: 7  
 Treasury Bills (Day-Spy) 2 min 6 1/4, 3 min 6 1/4, 3 mth 6 1/4, 6 mth 6 1/4, 12 mth 6 1/4

	1 mth	2 mth	3 mth	6 mth	12 mth
Prime Bank Bills (Dist)	7 1/4-7 1/2	7 1/4-7 1/2	7 1/4-7 1/2	7 1/4-7 1/2	7 1/4-7 1/2
Sterling Money Rates	7 1/4-7 1/2	7 1/4-7 1/2	7 1/4-7 1/2	7 1/4-7 1/2	7 1/4-7 1/2
Interbank	7 1/4-7 1/2	7 1/4-7 1/2	7 1/4-7 1/2	7 1/4-7 1/2	7 1/4-7 1/2
Overnight: open 7, close 6 1/4					

Local Authority Depos:

	7 1/4	7 1/2	7 1/4	7 1/2
Sterling CDs	7 1/4	7 1/2	7 1/4	7 1/2
Dollar CDs	3.38-3.35	3.38-3.35	3.38-3.35	3.38-3.35
Building Society CDs	7 1/4-7 1/2	7 1/4-7 1/2	7 1/4-7 1/2	7 1/4-7 1/2

**TREASURY BILLS:** Applies: £445m allotted: £100m 91ds: £98.40% received: 100%  
 Last week: £98.40% received: 65%

EUROPEAN MONEY DEPOSITS (%)						
Currency	7 day	1 month	3 months	6 months	9 months	12 months
Dollar	3-2 1/2	3-3 1/4	3-3 3/4	3-3 3/4	3-3 3/4	3-2 1/2
Deutschmark	9-9 1/2	9-9 1/2	9-9 1/2	9-9 1/2	9-9 1/2	9-9 1/2
Swiss Franc	11-11 1/2	12-12 1/2	12-12 1/2	8 1/2-8 3/4	9-9 1/4	11-11 1/2
French Franc	5-5 1/2	6-6 1/4	6-6 1/4	6-6 1/4	6-6 1/4	6-6 1/4
Yen	3 1/4-3 3/4	3 1/4-3 3/4	3 1/4-3 3/4	3 1/4-3 3/4	3 1/4-3 3/4	3 1/4-3 3/4

*(continued)*

## Tourname



















# Turner takes over chairman's job at Peterborough

## Ashton plan for next century

A high-contrast, black and white photograph of a man, likely a boxer, looking down and slightly to the side. He is wearing boxing gloves and a dark, patterned garment. The image is grainy and has a stark, dramatic quality.

## Cuts could hamper Schwer

September in India. These players are in need of experience but what is the worth of going to Bombay now that the quality of the opposition has been reduced?

There is no guarantee that the political situation in India will have improved by February and a question mark remains over whether the event might be held at all.

□ East Grinstead begin the defence of their Crystal Palace indoor league title this weekend without Richard Leman, who has not recovered from an ankle injury.

Dave Metcalfe, one of Britain's leading rally drivers, died on Thursday in a road accident near his home at Kendal, Cumbria. Metcalfe, 35, had been a professional rally driver for Vauxhall Motors since the mid-1980s and was regarded as one of Europe's experts in front-wheel drive cars.

Metcalfe was driving an Opel Calibra, which had been prepared for the 1993 Monte Carlo rally, and was returning to Kendal on the A6 when it was involved in a collision with two other vehicles.

## Testing times

**Motor racing:** Mark Blundell, the McLaren test driver, looks likely to return to grand prix racing next season with Ligier-Renault, having tested with them in France yesterday.


☐ The 1993 French grand prix may be reprieved after a government announcement that cars carrying cigarette advertising will not be seized when they race in France.

**Cricket:** Mark Nicholas has been reappointed captain of Hampshire, ending speculation that he would be joining a Sunday newspaper as a cricket correspondent.

**Protest move**

**Squash:** Jonah Barrington, 51, the former world No. 1, has threatened to come out of retirement for the English national championships next month as a protest against the proposed boycott of the event by the county's top men.

**Sports writers:** Ken Jones, chief sports correspondent of *The Independent*, was recovering in Christopher ward at Guy's hospital yesterday after having his right hand amputated following an accident at London Bridge station.



**Melroy: appointed**

### Oldham v Tottenham

A week after conceding five goals to Wimbledon Oldham's defence must brace itself to cope with the Tottenham side fresh from undoing Arsenal. Having recovered from the broken finger which sidelined him for a month, Marshall now has influenza and is doubtful for Oldham but Barlow definitely starts at left back in place of the one who was included in an Oldham squad for the first time this season. Tottenham are unrealised but Anderson, scorer of a hat-trick for the reserves in midweek, is a substitute.

## Replay experiment has won over the doubters

African board's managing director, limited replays to settling line decisions alone, however, when he followed up the experiment. Both of the International Cricket Council's match referees in South Africa, Clive Lloyd and Mike Smith, are convinced that replays have proved their worth.

Spectators have revelled in the drama of the wait for the verdict from the third umpire in the pavilion and when a big screen is available at the ground they can watch the replays themselves. All tension on the field evaporates as soon as the verdict comes.

Bacher is making tapes of replay decisions available to other Test countries to study. In the new year England are almost certain to sample replays for the first time in India; Pakistan and Australia will do so in New Zealand; and West Indies in February when they join Pakistan in a triangular series in South Africa.

**BIAHLON**

**POHJUKA, Slovenia: World Cup: Men's 30km:** 1. P. Bally (Fr), 56:11.5 (D); 2. M. Kirchner (Ger), 56:17.8 (1); 3. S. Staligen (Ger), 56:10.8 (2); 4. J.-A. Tydum (Nor), 56:16.2 (7); 5. F. Luck (Ger), 56:19.1 (5); 6. I. Hovnikov (Slovak), 56:21.9 (1); 7. I.

## REAL TENNIS

**BRITISH OPEN:** Under 24: Singles: Second Round: J G Pratt bt M Coghlan, 6-2, 5-6, 6-5. Quarter-finals: N Wood bt G Baker, 6-2, 6-2; T Heughan bt A Snelgrove, 4-6, 6-3, 6-4; R Gurn bt J G Pratt, 6-3, 6-4;

## SQUASH

**QATAR:** International tournament: Selected results: First round: R Martin (Aus) bt C Leach (Eng), 15-12, 18-11, 15-8; S Parke (Eng) bt G Wilson (NZ), 13-15, 15-5, 7-15, 15-6, 15-8; P Marshall (Eng) bt S Baker

Lager (P Goss), 2,827; 4, Coopers & Lybrand (V Cherry), 3,909; 5, Group 4 Securitas (M Goding), 2,925; 6, Heath Insured (A Donovan), 2,929; 7, Pride of Teesside (I MacGillivray), 3,020; 8, Inter spray (P Joffes), 3,158; 9, Rhone-Poulenc (P Phillips), 3,459. Retired: British Steel II (dormant).

The Independent, was recovering in Christopher ward at Guy's hospital yesterday after having his right hand amputated following an accident at London Bridge station.



SATURDAY DECEMBER 19 1992

# Time to tame the intolerable law-breakers



Graham: complaining

I AM worried about George Graham. The intolerable pressures, at £2,000 and more per week, involved in handling 11 blokes kicking a football around is clearly affecting his head.

Perhaps he needs one of those discount long-weekend breaks; omitting, of course, the free morning newspaper. First, Graham was complaining on radio that none of the media commenting on the game knew anything about it. Now, he is suggesting that clubs should not have referees of whom they disapprove.

Perhaps he should try a spell with no media coverage and no referees and see how Arsenal fare, commercially and tactically.

Given the behaviour of both Arsenal and Tottenham Hotspur last Saturday, it seems they should also be playing without spectators.

The level of intimidation throughout the match, from what I hear from several officials, was a danger to public mental health.

It is time for Graham to stop moaning about the media in the eye of others.

I have been fortunate the past few weeks in seeing a succession of outstanding matches: Liverpool-Blackburn, PSV-Milan, Leeds-Forest, Villa-Norwich, Tottenham-Villa.

Elsewhere, the evidence, as at Tottenham last week, seems to support the view expressed a month ago that

**David Miller examines the falling standards of behaviour on the football field and asks the FA how it plans to solve the dilemma**

The Football Association has not been doing sufficient to tame the law-breakers.

In response to my allegation that the deeds on the Vince Jones video had all taken place under the two benevolent jurisdictions of the FA, Graham Kelly, in a letter published in *The Times*, said that the FA was well aware of its responsibilities on discipline.

Yet there was Kelly, only a short while later, appearing as witness for the defence in the Gary Blissett trial, saying that

he saw 200 such "ordinary" serial challenges every week.

I put it to the FA's chief executive yesterday that those views are contradictory. Kelly, to his credit, is most concerned about the present state of the game and he explained that his defence of Blissett — which so infuriated referees, Blissett having been sent off and suspended for the incident — was because a subsequent FA commission had cleared Blissett on a further charge of serious breach of the laws.

With Blissett facing possible criminal conviction, Kelly considered the FA was obliged to stand up and reconfirm the FA's own internal judgment at the time. The court was clearly influenced by his evidence.

Peter Willis, chairman of the Referees' Association, is alarmed at the apparent dichotomy between the FA and referees but has since accepted Kelly's assurance that the trial put the FA in a technically difficult position.

The imponderable of football's laws is the element of intent that referees have to determine in split seconds.

Yet if Kelly is seeing 200 such challenges, something is deeply wrong.

He will be calling a series of

high-level meetings to debate the crisis.

"We have to do something to protect the players," he said yesterday. From themselves, that is. "There is a potential problem in the aerial challenges," he added.

And what about on the ground? The Tottenham-Arsenal match was a frenzy, I hear, from the moment of the foul by Howells on Hillier in the first few seconds.

Doug Livermore, the Tottenham first-team coach, claimed afterwards that he had "sent them out to compete all over the pitch for every ball". Arsenal responded likewise. How can any referee cope with such sustained, calculated intimidation by both teams?

Those being fined and suspended ought to be the managers and coaches who encourage their players into this frenzy.

It is a mood you can observe in Livermore and his assistant, Ray Clemence, on the touchline in almost every match Tottenham play. They are guilty of deforming and defaming their sport.

The standard of referees, however, is seriously inadequate.

In an enthralling match between Liverpool and Blackburn Rovers at Anfield last weekend, the referee, Philip Don, was continually getting in the way of the flow of play through lack of understanding of players' imminent intentions.

Parry fades from lead after bright start

## Norman forces the pace from Faldo and Roe

FROM MITCHELL PLATT, GOLF CORRESPONDENT, IN MONTEGO BAY

NICK Faldo was locked in a fascinating confrontation for the halfway lead in the Johnnie Walker world championship on the Tryall course here yesterday.

Craig Parry, of Australia, began the second round with a three-shot lead, following an opening 68, but he began to labour as both his compatriot, Greg Norman, and Faldo snapped at his heels.

Faldo, out in 35 under a hot sun, had that cold, calculating look in his eyes and Norman made an encouraging start when he followed par at the first two holes with a two at the 3rd.

Parry retreated with an outward half of 36, one over par, and he fell further back by dropping shots at both the 10th and the 13th.

He had hoped to play the first nine holes before the wind came up but the organisers delayed the start for 45 minutes to accommodate television coverage.

Even so, Parry initially looked comfortable. He hit six-iron approaches to the 1st and

2nd holes, finding the targets with ease, and made a fine birdie at the 4th, where he played a delightful bunker shot of 25 yards to within four feet of the cup.

He let rip with a huge drive at the 6th, leaving himself with little more than 80 yards to go, but he misjudged the shot and the ball ran through into the back bunker.

He faced a particularly difficult shot, with the green falling away from him and the pin only eight yards away. He managed to get the ball only halfway to the hole and missed the putt.

Parry leaked his drive to the right at the 7th but he recovered from the rough with a glorious five-iron shot of 192 yards. He held it on the right-to-left wind and two putts gave him his par.

Yet there were still signs that Parry, who has been having lessons from David Leadbetter, was beginning to struggle.

He had to hole from eight feet for a par at the 8th but could not escape at the 9th.

where he dropped a shot after driving into the left rough.

Faldo made an inauspicious start when he took three putts at the 1st. He hit his first attempt eight feet too long, his next four feet past and was relieved to sink the third.

At the 2nd, Faldo nursed the ball in from five feet above the hole for a birdie. He had to hole from a similar length to save his par at the next.

He advanced with another birdie at the 7th but dropped a shot at the next. Out in 35, he started home with pars at the 10th and 11th.

Norman turned his career around when he won in the Canadian Open two months ago, after more than two years without a win. He likes the Tryall course because it keeps his attention at all times.

"There is no let up out there, especially when the wind blows," he said. "It reminds me a lot of Open Championship courses because you have to play all manner of shots."

His two at the 3rd took him to level par for the championship, at which point he led by one from Faldo, Parry, Mark Roe, who played his first seven holes in level par, and Peter O'Malley, another Australian.

Sandy Lyle, who was paired with Norman, revealed that he will not compete in the Masters at Augusta from April 8 to 11 if his wife, Jolande, gives birth to their first child that week. "She wants me to be there," he said. "It decides not to play, his only appearance in a major championship in 1993 will be in the Open. He has not qualified for either the US Open or US PGA."

**FIRST-ROUND SCORES:** 68, C. Parry (Aus) 71; G. Norman (Aus), P. O'Malley (Aus), M. Roe (GB), N. Faldo (GB) 72; O. Love (US) 73; D. Edwards (US), R. Floyd (US), J. Woodson (GB), T. Ellis (US) 74; C. Montgomerie (GB) 75; J. Palmer (GB), P. Azinger (US), M. O'Rourke (US), S. Forster (GB), A. Johnston (GB), S. Ballesteros (GB), A. Lyle (GB), B. Lane (GB) 77; B. Langford (GB), C. Paine (GB), F. Coles (US), 78; C. O'Connor (US), S. F. Alker (Aus), S. Ellington (Aus), S. B. Faison (US), J. Sorenson (US), S. D. Frost (Aus).



Swing time: Parry, of Australia, tees off at the 4th hole in the Johnnie Walker world championship in Montego Bay, Jamaica

## Managers agree on Townsend's worth

By LOUISE TAYLOR

ALEX Ferguson was prepared to part with several million pounds, or two of his foremost players, in exchange for Andy Townsend last summer. Chelsea had different ideas and resolutely resisted the Manchester United manager's overtures for their inspirational midfielder player, who captains them against United in the day's top match at Stamford Bridge this afternoon.

While United may be wondering how their championship challenge might have fared with Townsend on board, they are not doing too

badly without him. After four successive wins they are third in the Premier League, one point and one place better off than Chelsea, who have been beaten only once in their last 12 matches.

Ferguson is, however, once again without the services of his most dynamic midfielder player, Bryan Robson, who is injured, as is Ryan Giggs, so the manager is expected to introduce Keith Gillespie, 17, a product of the United youth policy, for his debut on the wing, where he could find himself in direct opposition to Mal Donaghy, 35, who joined Chelsea for £100,000 from

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Norwich	19	12	3	4	34	32	30
A Villa	19	9	7	3	30	20	34
Man Utd	19	8	8	4	21	13	33
Chelsea	19	9	6	5	28	20	32
Blackburn	19	8	7	4	29	17	31
Ipswich	19	8	11	2	27	22	29
QPR	19	8	5	6	26	22	29
Arsenal	19	9	5	5	22	20	29
Liverpool	19	8	4	7	33	27	28

Old Trafford during the summer and has, against the odds, established himself as a first-team regular.

Another of the older hands, Mick Harford, Chelsea's leading scorer with ten goals, was

scheduled to return from suspension today but could be ruled out by a calf strain. A late fitness test will decide. But crucial to Chelsea's success has been the emergence of their home-grown youngsters and another of them, Neil Shipperley, 18, a pretender to Harford's position at centre forward, is likely to be among the substitutes.

Harford comes from Sunderland, once known as the "Bank of England team". Now he is playing for the "Royal Bank of Scotland club" following their purchase of Stamford Bridge this week.

The trophy room is thus safe

from the property developers, but will there be some silverware to put in it come the spring? Ian Porterfield, the manager, was non-committal yesterday. "It is too early to talk about championships. If we are still doing well in March, that will be the time."

"We must not become overconfident and if we are to keep our good run going we must approach matches with even more determination. But Andy Townsend is the player who has been the most vital to our success: he is the driving force."

More football, page 31

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73b North Street  
LITCHFIELD 0593 527218  
94 Gurney Street  
OXFORD 0185 241773  
41 St Clements Road  
TUNBRIDGE WELLS 0292 521545  
34 Mount Edgemoor Road  
WATFORD 0494 241778  
478 St Albans Road

## Football fact: fantasy just a goal away

THERE are many ways of worshipping at football's shrine. Simply going to watch your favourite team every week — or even playing the damn sport — is frightfully vieux jeu these days. Groundhoppers visit obscure non-League grounds and collect programmes, but even this is becoming yesterday's fad.

This season I am bombarded with bums from people variously called Dream League and Fantasy League. You form a league of friends and colleagues and, in one version, you select your own team of 11 real players. As these players score real goals, you award your team one point. As your goalkeeper lets in a goal, you take a point away. That's it. Apparently, there is an in-house league at FA headquarters.

I even have a fat, serious-

looking book, *Dream League: A Guide to Success*, by Peter Wroe. "I warn you now that Dream League will change your views on a lot of things," he says. Oh-ah? Fantasy League invites me to spend £20 million on an "all-star squad... it's so real it's like the real thing".

It strikes me that sport is already a fantasy world, and that is its point. This new stuff is a fantasy about a fantasy. Oh well, in the immortal words of Miss Jean Brodie, for those who like that sort of thing, that is the sort of thing they like.

### Gift selection

Christmas Present Idea (1): a subscription to *Johnny Miller 96 Not Out*, the cricket fanzine. Worth it if only for the cover of the latest issue, which is in the traditional Private Eye format. It shows the wedding photograph of David Gower and wife. Bride: "You haven't been picked for the honeymoon." From 1 Wellington Crescent, Horfield, Bristol, Avon, BS7 8SZ.



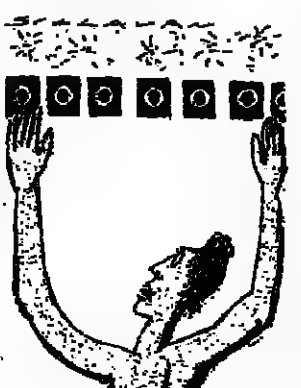
**SIMON BARNES**  
Sporting Diary

Christmas present idea (2): Bend It 1992: a CD of hideous football songs. It includes such titles as "Soccer in the Sixties — the Young Scene" (by the Cambray Street Pop Orchestra), "The Leeds United Calypso" and "Roberto Baggio Non E Un

Miraggio". Terry Venables sings "I've got you under my Skin" and Brian Clough the immortal "Shredded Wheat". We also have the voices of Pelé, John Altott and Her Majesty The Queen. All from Exotica, 49 Belvoir Road, London SE22 0QY.

### Gym slips

Christmas Present Idea (3): a subscription to the gymnastics fanzine, *Gym Stars*. Glossy and suitable for somersaulting children: anyone else should get it in a plain brown wrapper. Fascinating fact: "Did you know that if your leotard is not of regulation cut and style you could lose 0.1 marks?" And you thought modesty was dead. From 44 Fitzjohn Avenue, London NW3 5LX.



### Ice guy's error

But what, I hear you ask, of the ice hockey announcer who was sent off last week? Well, Darren Bavester has been reinstated as announcer for the Bracknell Bees, and faces no further action from the league. The ref sent him off for "sarcasm" (some may remember this as the cruellest weapon of Dinsdale Piranha). Bavester successfully maintained that his response to a penalty imposed on a Bracknell player was not sarcasm but surprise: "Matt Cote getting a penalty for unsportsmanlike conduct is like the Queen Mother getting a parking ticket."

### On the box

The cuddly heavyweight boxer has always been more a British than an American tradition. But George Foreman is changing that. No, he is not doing panto, a small relief in a difficult season for the fastidious. He is working on the pilot for a TV comedy series called *George*. "For the first

time I'm at the mercy of other pros," he said. The show is about a retired boxer, George Foster. To my horror, it seems designed to be "heart-warming". "It's about trying to find another way to get kids interested in education," Foreman said. "It's George Foster v The Bad Attitude."

### Caught short

It is time to ring down the curtain on a memorable season of limericks. A thousand thanks to everyone who contributed: I am only sorry there were not a thousand bottles of port to distribute. The last bottle of ambrosial Calum Colthearts 1978 goes to Bobby Bovill for a touch of scatological in this limerick, in which he asks me to send a bottle to the England cricket selectors:

After decanting your bottle of port  
Mix a dose of a sublimosort.  
A casagra potion  
Would guarantee motion:  
They'll be bowled and run out and caught short.  
On that tasteful note —  
happy Christmas.





## FOOD

Frances Bissell's instant Christmas

Page 4



## OUT OF TOWN

Prince Charles and the royal flush

Page 3



## CAROL SERVICES

Countrywide church guide

Page 7

NIGELLA LAWSON ON TELEVISION  
Page 16

# WEEKEND

# 3

THE TIMES SATURDAY DECEMBER 19 1992

## Stealing the night sky away

Urban lighting is blotting out the majesty of the stars.

Nigel Hawkes beseeches the experts to darken our lightness

When did you last see the night sky? I mean the whole sky, packed with stars from horizon to horizon? Not recently, I bet. Slowly, and with barely a peep of protest, we are losing our view of the heavens, something that man has marvelled at since we first came out of the caves.

The Wise Men setting off for Bethlehem all those Christmases ago followed the light of the star to where the baby lay. Today they would be blinded by more earthly illuminations. On satellite pictures of the Earth, Israel appears as a brilliant white strip, the lights of civilisation spilling wastefully into space. Similar spurges of light cover large areas of the globe, brightest of all over Japan and Germany.

An intelligent alien could make a very fair map of the Earth's population distribution by looking at the dark side of the planet. Large conurbations are easily seen, even roads and railway lines. In the tropics, grassland and forest fires are the main sources of illumination, while in the Sea of Japan the lights used to attract squid to the surface form a huge and brilliant pool. Only in remote areas it is possible to enjoy the majesty of the skies.

Few complain. We have allowed our view of the heavens to be taken from us without noticing, as we allowed the air to be polluted by smoke and the environment by pesticides. A whole dimension of human experience has been spirited away. It is, I think, one of the greatest cultural impoverishments of the past half-century, and a good part of it is completely unnecessary.

"The absolute majesty, the incredible power of a truly dark, star-packed sky was part of the experience of all of humanity throughout all of human history," says Alan MacRobert, associate editor of *Sky and Telescope Magazine*, based in Cambridge, Massachusetts. "Now, in developed countries, it's practically unknown."

The stars are still there, but we cannot see them. So bright has the whole night environment become that our eyes no longer operate at their greatest sensitivity. Astronomers have already fled from urban observatories, and even remote sites are coming under increasing pressure. The 100in reflector at Mount Wilson observatory near Los Angeles has been closed, the



Twinkle, twinkle, little street light: the "absolute majesty... of a truly dark, star-packed sky" is now largely unknown to city-dwellers in the developed world, dazzled by the glow from billions of bulbs

result of a night sky five times brighter than the natural background. The 200in instrument at Mount Palomar is increasingly threatened by light from San Diego, and Britain's largest telescope has taken refuge in the Canaries, at La Palma, where local authorities have passed a law to protect the darkness of the sky.

Astronomers, to their credit, have made a great fuss about light pollution, but the issue goes much wider than that. The sky is not the province only of astronomers; it is the birthright of poets, philosophers, princes, and paupers.

The stars have had a role in every culture: they have been described variously as tiny holes through which celestial fire may be glimpsed, as diamonds set in the heavens, and (by the Inuit) as small lakes glittering in the dark meadows of the night. The constellations were identified by Ptolemy the Elder and given the names of earthly things: the Bear, the Bull, Perseus, and Berenice's Hair. Newton and Kepler studied the motion of the

planets and revolutionised our understanding of gravity.

Today, the study of astronomy is a way of looking back to when the universe was young. Every age finds in the heavens something to set it thinking. Without the bowl of night and its billions of stars and galaxies, the history of science and man's perception of eternity would have been quite different.

A shrinking number of people can now appreciate this source of inspiration. City dwellers are the most seriously impoverished, and that means most of us, but the light-spill from urban centres spreads its poison widely. A simple formula devised by the astronomer Merle Walker can be used to estimate the sky glow at any site, looking upwards and towards a source of urban light. A town of 30,000 inhabitants will cause a glow 10 per cent above the background level at a distance of 15 miles, and a city of 180,000 will produce a similar increase twice as far away. In a small country such as Britain, as Dr John Mason, president of the

British Astronomical Association, wrote in a recent issue of *Astronomy Now*, that means that it is virtually impossible to get far enough away from large towns and cities to find a really dark sky. Alas, those who live in villages are following the same course. Street lights, even when they do not line the older byways, are often compulsory for new "closes" of executive housing. Security lighting is blossoming on thousands of old manor houses, and the latest plague is floodlit sports fields.

In the Kent village where I live, the tennis club won approval to install floodlights, in spite of some opposition. I do not blame the players, although I regret not making the point that they were stealing the night from the rest of us — but that would not have been a legitimate planning consideration. The night is owned by everybody, and by nobody: the recipe for environmental degradation down the ages.

David Crawford, an astronomer

at Kitt Peak National Observatory in Tucson, Arizona, says: "If things keep going the way they are, the only place you'll see a really dark sky is in a planetarium." Four years ago he founded the International Dark Sky Association, which aims to make outdoor lighting cheaper and more efficient. Three-quarters of the light that spills into the sky is caused by badly designed and installed lights that point up instead of down. "All the solutions necessary to preserve the night sky also promote better visibility at night, eliminate the glare and trashy lighting that is all too common, and save an astronomical amount of energy and money," Dr Crawford says.

In Britain, Dr Mason's *bête noire* is the globe-shaped lamp, which has sprung up in thousands, usually in places trying to project an air of gracious good design. It looks pretty by day, but at night it throws too much light upwards.

The British Astronomical Association, in collaboration with the Institution of Lighting Engineers,

has drafted a set of guidance notes for the reduction of light pollution. Many of Britain's street lights are old and inefficient, Dr Mason says. Newer lights now being introduced, such as the full cut-off, or flat-glass lantern, are much better.

Astronomers have special needs and prefer the use of low-pressure sodium lamps, whose yellow light is easier to filter out. For aesthetic and security reasons, high-pressure sodium lights, which more closely approximate to ordinary white light, are preferable for the rest of us, because things look their proper colour. In either case, an efficient lantern throwing light downwards can do a lot to reduce sky glare.

Under pressure from the Kitt Peak observatory, the town of Tucson switched to downward-facing sodium lamps on its 14,000 street lights. That way, "all your energy is spent putting lights where people are and not where Martians are", says Richard Guthrie, the city's electrical engineer. The changes save nearly \$2 million (£1.25 million) a year in power costs.

In Britain, the Portsmouth city lighting engineer, Gerry Davis, insists that all illuminated signs are lit from above and to the minimum levels necessary, and he has persuaded a supermarket chain to modify its car-park lighting, with excellent results. He says that developments in lantern technology, particularly in low-pressure sodium lamps, are long overdue. On the Continent, better designs are available, and he suggests they should be used here.

Ultimately, I believe we will need a law of the sky, to preserve at least some wilder places from the invasion of light. The encroachment of light into the countryside needs to be monitored as vigorously as any other form of development. The light from the stars has taken millions, even billions, of years to reach us. For it to be lost in the glare of man-made light on its very last lap is tragic and pointless.

Let's rescue the Milky Way from being the name of a chocolate bar, and nothing else. Our watchword should be: Let there be dark.

We are coming, said an astrology "freak" I met this week, towards "a multiple end-of-an-era scenario". "End of an era for the Church of England, end of an era for Lloyd's, end of an era for the royal family, that eclipse of the moon was one of the portents of change..." he intoned with a knowing look on his face.

One of the eras we are definitely coming to the end of is the era of journalistic coverage of the upper classes. The subject of "society" suddenly became of interest again in the early 1980s after a discreet 30-year silence.

The interest was triggered primarily by two factors. Firstly, the whole country fell in love with the Princess of Wales at the beginning of the decade. Secondly, the resuscitated *Tatler* was being edited by two very witty people — first Tina Brown, then Mark Boxer. In a wave of imitative euphoria, newspapers and journals which, for years, had been happy to ignore

## An era running in ever-decreasing circles

What social group will become the focus of the 1990s?

society suddenly started publishing their own society sections and running features on Ascot, Henley, Glyndebourne, coming out, riding and tipping.

I had personally read enough articles about coming out by 1985, and could hardly believe my eyes when I saw virtually the same sentences being written about it May after May. Ditto Henley, Ascot and Glyndebourne.

Dafydd Jones-style photographs of people at parties appeared in almost every Sunday colour supplement — the lensmen deliberately aiming for fatground mirror-like distortions of their victims' faces, snapping away if someone yawned, blinked or looked downwards without their specs, creating a ruff of flesh atop their collars.

But how can we continue to write articles about the upper classes

when so many of its members have gone "belly up", as they call it? Grand houses are lining up to be sold, grandees are looking for paid work, and we can no longer get any pleasure out of reading about the tormented chief Sloane Ranger herself.

I have an old friend (in both senses of the word) named Ann. Her weird and wacky angle on life has always been of interest to me. Once, for example, in November 1989, she responded like this when I told her I had been asked rather aggressively by a man I knew why I was so interested in the upper classes.

I didn't really know myself,



WEEKEND voice  
MARY KILLEN

although it was probably linked to the job I had on *Tatler* at the time. "How ridiculous!" Ann snapped. "Doesn't he see the upper classes are where it's at? They are where the action is. They are fun to be around. In the 1960s it was pop stars, in the 1970s it was junkies

and photographers. In the 1980s, it's the upper classes!" Yes, in the 1980s it was the upper classes. What social group will now move forward to excite our imaginations and spawn acres of newspaper? Policemen? Central heating engineers? Women priests?

I was rather hoping it would be crop circle experts. We live in crop circle country here in Wiltshire. Indeed, my husband and I actually reported the Alton Barnes configuration — the most impressive, and the one which appears on the cover of the *Led Zeppelin Remasters* album — to the "experts". We were the first humans into it, having been tipped

off by our ten-year-old neighbour, who had spotted it from a hill.

We enjoyed two years of circle hunting and attending events such as the Conference at Glastonbury, and secret-society style meetings at the Wagon and Horses pub near Beckhampton, where the circle experts met to update one another on new sightings.

It was an exciting time, like being an early hippie with glamorous weirdos at the helm of the movement, hushed up sightings, and camping out of doors waiting for "events".

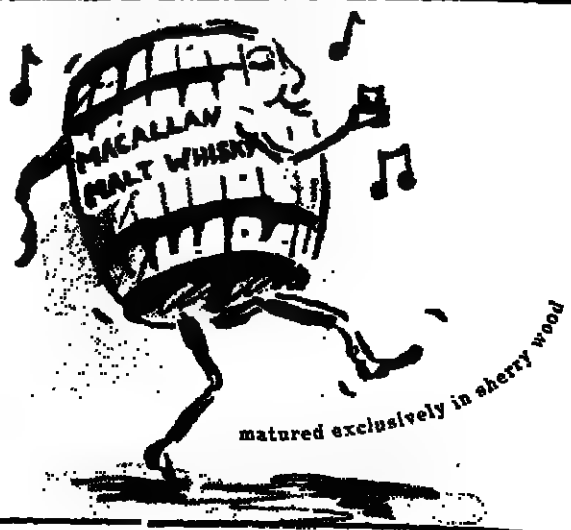
At one meeting in Silbury Hill car-park there were: one hippie calling himself "the Crazy Goblin" (and dressed as one), six men with beards, and four "straights". One of the straights believed that the circles were "something to do with music, harmonics and mathematical

ies". The Crazy Goblin, however, clearly saw circles as an exclusively hippie preserve. But he said: "Well, there's obviously been a weaving together of the ways and a lot of people are coming here from a lot of different inspirations."

"It was a time of pits," joked a cruel friend who had been sceptical all along, when sadly we saw that the circles were not to last. Two men named Doug and Dave came forward saying that they had made all the circles as a hoax. They couldn't possibly have done them all, and many of the slightly humiliated "experts" — some of whom were middle-aged men who had given up their steady jobs to become full-time experts — believe it was a Ministry of Defence plot to ally public hysteria about the repeated and inexplicable appearances of these circles.

I do hope we can reactivate crop circle fever next summer. We need a bit of magic in our lives to replace the void left by current era-ending events.

## Tired of karaoke? Try Sherry Oakey!



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● Performance and opening times may vary during the Christmas period so please check with box-offices beforehand.

## THEATRE

## LONDON

**ALADDIN:** Enjoyable panto with strong characters and foot-tapping songs, directed by Philip Hedley. Theatre Royal Stratford East, Gemy Raffles Square, E15 (081-534 0310). Mon-Sat, 2.15pm and 7.15pm, from New Year's day, Tues-Sat, 2.15pm and 7.15pm (closed Christmas day).



**Duo: Kohler and Barri in The Comedy of Errors**

**BARNUM:** Paul Nicholas walks the tightrope in a Christmas revival of the musical. Dominion, Tottenham Court Road, W1 (071-580 8845). Mon-Sat, 7.30pm, mids Wed and Sat, 3pm (closed Christmas day).

**CAROUSEL:** Joanna Riding and Michael Hayden star in a triumphant revival of the Rodgers & Hammerstein farground musical. National (Lyttelton), South Bank, SE1 (071-928 2252). Mon-Sat, 7.30pm, mids Sat, 2.15pm (closed Christmas day and Christmas eve).

**THE COMEDY OF ERRORS:** Ian Judge's sublimely funny production back in London, with award-winning Desmond Barri playing both portly twins. Co-stars Estelle Kohler. Barbican, Silk Street, EC2 (071-536 5891). Opera Wed, 7pm; from Boxing day-Jan 5: eves, 7.15pm, mids Wed and Sat, 2pm (closed Christmas day).

**CYRANO DE BERGERAC:** Robert Lindsay looks right as the nasally challenged hero but the production is too bustling to give enough room to the full poignancy of his fate. Theatre Royal, Haymarket, SW1 (071-930-8800). Mon-Sat, 7.30pm, mids Wed and Sat, 2.30pm (closed Christmas eve and Christmas day).

**PINCHY KOBBI AND THE SEVEN DUPPIES:** The eight black actors of The Posse in a marvelously inventive variation on the Scrooge story. Recommended. Tricycle, 269 Kilburn High Road, NW5 (071-328 1000). Eves, 8pm, mids Sat, 4pm, until Jan 16 (closed Christmas eve and Christmas day).

**THE LION, THE WITCH AND THE WARDROBE:** This year's excursion to Narnia, courtesy of Vanessa Ford Productions. Somewhat better than others in the collection. Royal, Portugal Street, off Kingsway, WC2 (071-494 5090). Tues, 2.30pm and 4pm, Wed, 2.30pm and 6.30pm, Thurs, 2.30pm, next Sat, 2.30pm and 6.30pm, then continues at various times until Jan 16 (closed Christmas eve and New Year's day).

**THE PRISONER OF ZENDA:** David Haig plays the dashing Rudolph Rassendyll, splitting image of the King of Ruritania, in the best of all romantic adventures. Greenwich Theatre, Crooms Hill, SE10 (081-858 7755). Mon-Sat, 7.45pm, mids Sat, 2.30pm, except Boxing day and Dec 28, 3.30pm (closed Christmas eve and Christmas day).

**TRAVELS WITH MY AUNT:** Simon Cadell, John Wells, Richard Kane, Christopher Gee play all 26 parts in Giles Haverall's marvelous adaptation of Graham Greene's novel. Wyndham's, Charing Cross Road, WC2 (071-867 1116). Mon-Fri, 8pm, Sat, 8.15pm, mids Wed, 3pm, Sat, 5pm (closed Christmas eve and Christmas day).

**GLASGOW:** The Christmas show here is Myles Rudge's version of *The Jungle Book*, bold and colourful, directed by Giles Haverall. Citizens, Gorbals (041-429 0022). Mon-Sat, variously at 10am, 2pm and 7pm, until Jan 16 (closed Christmas eve, Christmas day and New Year's day).

**LEEDS:** *Granny and the Gnome*, or "The Great Age Escape", described as a hairy fairy story. For children of seven and upwards. Courtyard, West Yorkshire Playhouse (0532 442111). Today, 3pm and 7pm, Mon, 3pm, Tues, 3pm and 7pm, Wed, 3pm and 7pm, Thurs, 3pm, then at various times daily until Jan 9 (closed Christmas and New Year's day).

**MANCHESTER:** The Moonstone, the first-ever detective story, with plenty of suspects, including Indian jugglers and Helen Atwood as the owner of the missing jewel. Royal Exchange, St Ann's Square (061-833 9833). Preview Wed, 7.30pm, Mon-Thurs, 7.30pm, Fri and Sat, 8pm, mids Wed, 2.30pm and Sat, 4pm (closed Christmas day).

**OXFORD:** Daydreaming Princess Pootina and mischievous Tom Fool in *Fooling About*, by the team who produced last year's delightful *Magic Storybook*. Playhouse, Beaumont Street (0865 798600). Today, Mon, 10.15pm and 2pm, Tues, Wed, 2pm, Thurs, 10.15pm, then continues at various times until Jan 3 (closed Christmas day).

**BEAUTY AND THE BEAST (U):** Sumptuous Disney cartoon fairy-tale, blessed with skilled animation and attractive songs that might have sprung from a Broadway musical. Directors, Gary Trousdale, Kirk Wise. Curzon West End (071-439 4805) MGM Chelsea (071-352 5096) MGM Tottenham Court Road (071-436 6148) MGM Trocadero (071-434 0031) Odeons: Kensington (0426 914666) Mezzanine (0426 915683).

**BLADE RUNNER (15):** The improved "director's cut" of Ridley Scott's influential vision of a dark, hellish Los Angeles infested with rebel androids. Harrison Ford, Rutger Hauer. Camden Plaza (071-485 2443). Gate (071-727 4043) MGM Fulham Road (071-370 2636) MGM Shaftesbury Avenue (071-836 6279/379 7025) Screen on the Green (071-226 3520).

**CHAPLIN (12):** A skilled impersonation by Robert Downey Jr, but Richard Attenborough's bitly biographical epic never penetrates far inside the man or his career. Odeon Leicester Square (0426 915683).

**COOL WORLD (12):** Frenetic, suffocating mixed media extravaganza from animation's wild man Ralph Bakshi. With Gabriel Byrne, Kim Basinger. MGM Fulham Road (071-370 2636) MGM Tottenham Court Road (071-436 6148) MGM Trocadero (071-434 0031).

**THE CRYING GAME (18):** IRA gunman becomes obsessed with a hostage's girlfriend. Bold, powerful Neil Jordan film that falters at the close. Stars Stephen Rea, Forest Whitaker, Jaye Davidson, Miranda Richardson. Chelsea (071-351 3742/3743) Curzon Phoenix (071-240 9661) MGM Haymarket (071-439 1527).

**DEATH BECOMES HER (PG):** Meryl Streep and Goldie Hawn battle to attain eternal youth. Ice-cold black comedy, ultimately swamped by special effects. Stars Bruce Willis; directed by Robert Zemeckis. Camden Parkway (071-267 7034) Empire (071-497 9999) MGM Baker Street (071-935 9772) MGM Fulham Road (071-370 2636) MGM Trocadero (071-434 0031) UCI Whiteleys (071-792 3332).

**HOME ALONE 2: LOST IN NEW YORK (PG):** More of the same, with extra crudity and a horrid new streak of sentimentality. With Macaulay Culkin. Director, Chris Columbus. Barbican (071-638 8891) MGM Chelsea (071-352 5096) MGM Oxford Street (071-638 0310) Odeons: Kensington (0426 914666) Marble Arch (0426 915011) West End (0426 915574) UCI Whiteleys (071-792 3332).

**HUSBANDS AND WIVES (15):** Woody Allen's best film in years, a lacerating tale of collapsing New York marriages. Stars Allen and Mia Farrow. MGM Penton Street (071-930 0631) Odeon Mezzanine (0426 915683) Kinokir (071-837 8402).

**INTO THE WEST (PG):** Two gypsy children ride a mysterious white horse into western Ireland. Wayward but engaging. Stars Gabriel Byrne, Ellen Barkin. Director, Mike Newell. Odeon Haymarket (0426 915533).

**OF MICE AND MEN (PG):** Steinbeck's classic Depression tale of friendship and innocence. John Malkovich as the slow-witted Lennie; director Gary Sinise as his protector. Simple, sturdy and moving. Curzon West End (071-439 4805).

**THE MUPPET CHRISTMAS CAROL (U):** Successful blend of Dickens's story with Muppet madness. Starring Michael Caine. Director, Brian Henson. Camden Parkway (071-267 7034) MGM Baker Street (071-935 9772) MGM Chelsea (071-352 5096) MGM Haymarket (071-839 1527) MGM Oxford Street (071-638 0310) Odeons: Kensington (0426 914666) Mezzanine (0426 915683) UCI Whiteleys (071-792 3332).

**THE PRINCESS AND THE GOBLIN (U):** Blandly animated edition of George MacDonald's Victorian classic. Director, Jossiel Gemes. Odeon Kensington (0426 914666).

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Celebrating a century: Agnes Oaks in English National Ballet's *The Nutcracker*

## JAZZ

**GIANTS OF JAZZ:** A superb double-bill (also available separately) has The Brian White-Goff Dubber Sextet playing New Orleans jazz in the style of clarinetists Johnny Dodds and Jimmy Noone, followed by Dave Shepherd's polished septet performing the music of Benny Goodman. Purcell Room, South Bank, London, SE1 (071-928 8800), today, 5.30pm and 8.30pm.

**JOOLS HOLLAND:** The impressive performer plays boogie-woogie with his Big Band. Jazz Café, London, W1 (071-284 4358), Mon and Tues, 7pm.

**WILLIE FAWKES — BRUCE TURNER QUINTE:** The veteran Fleet Street cartoonist demonstrates his mastery of the clarinet with longtime associate and fellow clarinetist, Turner. PlazaExpress, London, W1 (071-437 9595), Wed, 7.45pm.

**ENGLISH CHAMBER ORCHESTRA:** A strong lineup of soloists — Anne Howells, John Mark Ainsley, Willard White and Thomas Allen — join the Tallis Chamber Choir and the ECO under Jeffrey Tate for a timely performance of Berlioz's oratorio, *L'Enfance du Christ*. Barbican, Silk Street, London EC2 (071-638 8891), Tues, 7.30pm.

**OPERA**  
**HANSEL AND GRETEL:** David Pountney's nostalgic but unromantic production is revived at English National Opera. Rosa Martin's bright, clear Gretel is in partnership with Ethna Robinson's Just William-ish Hansel. Lionel Ferns conducts. Coliseum, St Martin's Lane, London WC2 (071-836 3161), Mon, Wed, 7.30pm (mids Wed, 3pm, with Julie Gossard and Anne Gerbick).

**BILLY BUDD:** Graham Vick's production of Britten's grim tale of strife at sea makes for harrowing and thoroughly gripping evening at Opera North. Elgar Hall, Leeds (0113 244 1111), tonight, Jan 7, 8pm.

**ROCK**  
**MORRISSEY:** The glum Mancunian has been courting controversy recently by toying with nationalist imagery. Musically however, he is on fine form. Alexandra Palace, London, N22 (081-365 2121), tonight, 6pm.

**THE RAMONES:** The cartoon punks are promoting a razor-sharp new album, *Mondo Bizarro*. Town & Country Club, Leeds (0532 800100), tonight, 7.30pm. Brixton Academy, London, SW9 (071-326 1022), tomorrow, 7pm.

**WORD-WATCHING**  
Answers from page 16  
**STONKING**  
(c) Excellent, great, fantastic, also as adverb, very, extremely, from 1980 onwards: The Independent: "When they've got their dosh, they go out and have a stonking good time."

**QUANDONG**  
(a) A Miss Piggy, someone who looks after his or her interests, and damn the rest of the team, especially disreputably, from 1939 onwards. The name of two species of Australian tree and their fruit: according to Sidney Baker, "because the fruit is soft, but with a hard centre" (letter to Eric Partridge, quoted in his Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English).

**HERBERT**  
(c) Someone considered stupid or ridiculous, 1960-, arbitrary use of the unfashionable male forename, cf. "Erb a wag or funny fellow"; T. Barling: "A dozen baby-brained herberts looking to face me off just before they faced up to Koshier Kramer before the cobbles came up a bit smarterish."

**PRONK**  
(c) Someone weak or effeminate, a fool, 1959-, of uncertain origin, cf. Dutch pronker a fool; Colin MacInnes: "No one is going to try to blackmail me with that crazy old mixture of threats and congratulations that a pronk like you falls for."

**CROSSWORD ENTHUSIASTS:** For mail order details of all Times Crossword Books and The Times Computer Crossword software with help levels (runs on most PCs), call Akom Ltd on 081 852 4575 (24 hrs or 013 800000 - STOP PRESS: just released - The First Book of The Times Jumbo Concise Crosswords - ring Akom. Passage free until Christmas (applies UK only).

## DANCE

**CINDERELLA:** The Royal Ballet celebrates Christmas with an all-Ashton season: the double bill of *The Dream and Tales of Beatrix Potter* is coupled with *Cinderella*, which 41 years ago became the first full-length ballet by an English choreographer. Using Prokofiev's score, Ashton created some of his most delightful choreography, especially for the uppy stepsisters, one of the funniest double acts in all ballet. Royal Opera House, Covent Garden (071-240 1066), *Cinderella*: Wed, 7.30pm, Boxing day, 2.30pm and 7.30pm.

**THE NUTCRACKER:** Tchaikovsky's Christmas offering celebrates its 100th birthday this year, an event marked by English National Ballet in its annual *Nutcracker* season. Ben Stevenson's workaday production may not be the most inspired but it does

boost attractive designs, courtesy of Desmond Heeley. Festival Hall, South Bank, London SE1 (071-928 8800), Mon-Wed, 7.30pm, mids Tues-Thurs, 2.30pm.

**THE NUTCRACKER: Opera.** North is presenting a new version of Tchaikovsky's classic by choreographer Matthew Bourne and featuring the dancers of his *Adventures in Motion Pictures* company. Presented as part of a double-bill with the opera *Yolande*. Grand Theatre, 45 New Briggate, Leeds (0532 459351/440971), Mon-Tues, 7pm.

**MOTIONHOUSE:** For its latest project, Motionhouse has turned to Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. The novel's magic realism has inspired *Deja-Vu*, a work which involves performances in both an art gallery and theatre on the same evening. The piece is a

collaboration between Spanish installation artist Rosa Sanchez and Motionhouse choreographers Kevin Pinnar and Louise Richards. For tonight's performance in Birmingham the audience starts at the Icon Gallery at 7pm, before moving to the Dance Centre for the second half at 8.30pm. Alternatively, audiences can see either half on its own. Details on 021-440 3838.

## EXHIBITIONS

**VISUALISING MASCULINITIES:** The theme of this small show (13 works in total) is the way artists from the mid-19th century up to today have used the male body in art. The choice includes Millais, Epstein, Pollock and Bacon. Tate Gallery, Millbank, SW1 (071-821 1313), Mon-Sat, 10am-5.50pm, Sun, 2-5.50pm, today-June 6 (closed Christmas eve-Boxing day and New Year's day).

**ECCO ROMA:** This exhibition gathers from the gallery's own collection a series of tributes to the enduring magic of the Eternal City, including works made in Rome by such visitors as Brueghel, Elsheimer, Poussin and others, as well as locals such as Raphael and Piranesi. Scores Ramsay, Wilkie, David Roberts and Alexander Runciman also stand out. National Gallery of Scotland, The Mound, Edinburgh (031-556 8921), Mon-Sat, 10am-6pm, Sun, 11am-6pm, until Jan 31 (closed Christmas day, Boxing day, New Year's day, Jan 2 and 4).

**TIM HEAD:** For this, Head's most extensive show yet in London, the Lower Gallery has been painted sky-blue and Astor-turquoise to house a series of ink-jet pictures, *Thirteen Most Wanted*. Whitechapel Art Gallery, Whitechapel High Street, E1 (071-377 0107), Tues-Sun, 11am-5pm (Wed to 8pm), until Feb 28 (closed Christmas day-Dec 28 and New Year's day).

**SHELLEY: AN IMPECCABLE ANGEL?** A belated London celebration of the bicentenary of Shelley's birth in 1792, this show includes portraits and other Shelley-related art as well as manuscripts, annotated books and even fragments of his ashes. British Library Galleries, Great Russell Street, WC1 (071-636 1555), Mon-Sat, 10am-6pm, Sun, 2.30-6pm, until Feb 28 (closed Christmas eve-Dec 27 and New Year's day).

**BEARDSLEY TO BOMBERS:** Some of Beardsley's finest decadent drawings are included here, together with those of the Camden Town Group, Paul Nash and Bomberg. Tate Gallery, Millbank, SW1 (071-821 1313), Mon-Sat, 10am-6pm, Sun, 2-6pm, until Feb 14 (closed Christmas eve-Boxing day and New Year's day).

**SICKERT:** A chance to see the artist's later works, frequently based on newspaper photographs, as well as his more familiar Impressionist ones. Royal Academy of Arts, Piccadilly W1 (071-439 7438), Daily, 10am-6pm, until Feb 14, 1993 (closed Christmas eve-Boxing day).

## BOOKINGS

**YO TENGO UN TIO EN AMERICA:** Catalan company Els Joglars visits Britain in January to present its play *I Have an Uncle in America*, considered to be a daring contribution to the Columbus quinquenary when premiered in Spain earlier this year. The play is acted out in a psychiatric institution where six therapists encourage eight patients to reenact the conquest of America by the Spanish. Riverside Studios, Crisp Road, London, W6 (081-748 3354), Jan 19-Feb 6, 7.45pm.

**CITY OF BIRMINGHAM SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA:** As a curtain raiser to the South Bank's "Towards the Millennium" festival which returns in March and April, Pierre Boulez conducts the orchestra in a selection of 20th-century works including Webern's *Passacaglia*, Stravinsky's *Petrushka* and Bartók's *Piano Concerto*. Festival Hall, South Bank, London, SE1 (071-928 8800), Jan 27, 7.30pm.

## VIDEO

**FRIED GREEN TOMATOES AT THE WHISTLE STOP CAFE:** (Columbia TriStar, 12): Heart-warming lives of feisty folks down South. Episodic, shallow, but finally ingratiating. Kathy Bates, Jessica Tandy, Mary Stuart Masterson. Director, Jon Avnet. 1992.



Feisty: Bates and Tandy in *Fried Green Tomatoes*

**CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS — THE DISCOVERY** (Braveworld, PG): A pin-up navigator (George Clooney) discovers the New World. Silly juvenile romp, with a routine Marion Ilando cameo. Director, John G. 1992.

**NOISES OFF** (Buena Vista, 15): Peter Bogdanovich's valiant attempt to transfer Michael Fray's highly theatrical farce to film. Consigned for transatlantic tastes, but it sometimes succeeds in spite of itself. Michael Caine, Carol Burnett. 1992.

**Film:** Geoff Brown; **Theatre:** Jeremy Kingston; **Classical:** Rupert; **Opera:** Ian Brunskill; **Rock:** Jason Stephane Osborne; **Dance:** Debra Crane; **Exhibitions:** John Russell Taylor; **Video:** Geoff Brown; **Bookings:** Karl Knight.

## The year's thundering good read

Philip Howard introduces a collection of witty, thoughtful, even annoying, writing from *The Times*

This newspaper has manifold attributes and golden virtues for us groupies, for whom it is the only paper. Each of us approaches our daily fix of news and opinion, humour and provocation in a different order. I start with the bits that the readers write for us, without payment or invitation, down at the bottom right-hand corner of Letters, for the quirk and oddities of life, and then work my way upwards, crying "Excelsior!" towards the sterner stuff, where we are

Most of us read it in vexing conditions, such as walking around Kensington Gardens in the dim light of dawn beneath the jets pigeoning home into Heathrow, or standing jammed into unwelcome face-to-face contiguity with complete strangers, stationary in some tunnel on the Circle line. Few of us have the leisure of a couple of hours after breakfast in a leather armchair, preferably in a club without telephones and with a rule against casual conversation, to do the old mag justice. So lots of good things inevitably escape unread every day.

I had a dear friend called Nancy (sic) who used to cut out the bits she intended to read eventually, when she found the time. Over the years, her drawing-room gradually disappeared behind and beneath mountains of clippings from *The Times*, which she was going to get round to reading, one day. We resolve to read the paper in bed at night, but poetry is better for bedtime reading. Even my arms are not orang-utan's to handle a broadsheet while semi-supine. And by then the paper shows signs of children's scribbling. Jack Russell puppies' teeth and paws and the thousand natural shocks that daily newsprint is heir to.

So here comes another *Times Book of the Year*, *The Times Bedside Book 2*, recollecting in tranquillity a selection of pieces that have appeared in *The Times* during the past year. For the record, for bedtime or related reading, for pleasure (which must always be a purpose of journalism, though earnest journalists sometimes forget this ingredient of their mayfly trade).

It has been some year. Heavy and inscrutable politics, pregnant with doom: the continuing turmoil and confusion in the old Soviet empire, bloody wars and ethnic cleansing (vile euphemism of the year) in what used to be Yugoslavia, doubtful elections from the United Kingdom to the United States, uncertainty in Europe over Maastricht and ERM (two of the weasel

## THE TIMES BEDSIDE BOOK 2

Edited by  
PHILIP HOWARD

Foreword by Sir Bernard Ingham



words of the year for jargonists, recession and a continuing series of blunders and boos by all governments. It has been a harder year than usual for the futurologists of the daily press to read. This has not inhibited us from instant predictions, opinions,

versions and judgments in our daily first rough draft of history. Selecting the pieces for *The Times* book is a pig of a job. It is extra work in a day where there is already quite enough to do, including the daily semantic tease of Word Watching, which comes out remorselessly six days a week, and takes its setter at least 20 minutes to compose, when he is fresh. (Ignore all puns and other schoolboy jokes, and you are left with the answer.)

I could not have coped without the assistance of devoted work shadows, notably Philippa Jones now in her second year towards a first in English at UCL. We got in early, and trawled the paper for long-lived and unusual fish of all sorts. Here they are, between hard covers and beddable, everything from the hard stuff of politics to the fun of features and the first shot at biography of obits. From the thunder of leaders to the bit of *The Times* that readers write for themselves, their letters to the Ed.

*The Times* is first of all a daily paper, here today and lining for the Jack Russell puppies' basket tomorrow. But quite a lot of it improves in the cask like port. Here, in *The Times Bedside Book 2*, is a brief tasting, to show that some of the best contemporary writing is here, beneath our noses, every day, in the newspaper that is also the book of a Recording Angel and Imp.

● The *Times Bedside Book 2* (HarperCollins, £16.99) is on sale at major bookshops and newsagents. To get a copy with a bookplate signed by Philip Howard, please complete the coupon, credit card holders can order direct by phone on 0525 851945 (Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm).

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## Roll out the barrel to put an end to the rat race

A cornstack should be a silent thing. Perhaps it could be allowed the occasional rustle as the breeze lifts a straw, or even a crackle as the sparrows dive-bomb it in search of grains of food. But it is no place for a symphony orchestra to be squeakily tuning up, and such is the cacophony that I am forced to the conclusion that my cornstack has squatters. I have only to pass by and they shriek like throttled sopranos and scurry like thieves on the run. The whole stack is alive.

We have rats and I know not what to do.

Were I planning an apartment in which a rat could take a winter holiday, I would be hard pressed to come up with anything better. Our stack of wheat is dry, loaded with plump grains, enjoys extensive views over farm-buildings crammed with sacks, straw, hay

and all the other things rats like.

It even boasts a Riviera position, being near the ditch where they can promenade up to their horrid little knees in noxious mud and ditch-water.

They are a major pest. They steal the corn, fill the stacks with their vile droppings and plunder the rest of the farm, stealing eggs from the chickens, oats from the sheep and even gnawing through electricity cables to remind me that they are in charge.

Rat poison might be the obvious solution. I hear of one that comes in packets which the rat hauls back to his nest. There, he opens his little food parcel and offers it around.



FARMER'S DIARY: PAUL HENRY

This kills all the rats in the nest.

But I am reluctant to take the chemical option because of our visiting barn owl, who now makes a low nightly sweep along our ditches and hedges and spends a good half hour on the rafters of the barn, hunting. He arrives just after dusk at about the time I am fumbling in the dark (rats ate through the lighting wires) for hay for the horses. I sense his presence and when I look upwards he is there, staring at me. This brief encounter lasts for only a few seconds, for he soon takes fright and, with the gentlest hushing of his wings, he sweeps the length of the roof and is through the door heading for home in a rotten tree. I



have no wish to shorten his dignified and thoughtful life by offering him poisoned carcasses. Nor do I want to harm our kestrel, who spends most of his

working days hovering silently over the haystacks waiting for an unfortunate mouse to emerge and take the air. He homes on the tiniest of movements in grass or hedge, and

swoops for the kill. He is the only creature who has been at work each and every day since we have had this little farm, and I would not want to harm him either. So no poison.

This leaves cunning as my only weapon. Undeterred by my aged farming tomes which depressingly record "the extermination of rats is a task which must now be considered beyond the power of civilised man", I am determined to bring them to heel. Here is my plan, culled from a farmer who found this suicidal method of rat-catching irresistible.

You take a barrel and place it in the middle of the barn. Into this you pour a seductive mixture of wheat, chaff, oats, barley and any other luscious grain until you have created a rat's Christmas dinner. You provide him with a ramp so that he can easily climb to the rim

and quietly feast. Each day you replace what he has eaten until he is convinced that all his dreams have come true.

Then, on the seventh day, remove the corn and replace it with a foot of water. Hungry, horrid little rats will tiddle up the ramp, tucking their napkins into their collars in eager anticipation and, blinded by his appetite, plunge into the icy wet and very deadly depths. If the barrel is deep enough he will not clamber out. Bye bye, rats.

If it sounds far-fetched, I am told that the first time the inventive farmer employed the method he caught 60 rats in one night. Next week I shall try it but until then, every time I walk past the cornstack, I sing to myself "roll out the barrel, let's have a barrel of fun". It is just to lull them into a false sense of security. Cunning, eh?

## Raising royal eco-standards

The Prince of Wales is setting an environmental example at Highgrove House, Annie Rankin reports

When the Prince of Wales moved to Highgrove House in Gloucestershire, he determined to make it an experimental ground for his green vision. Highgrove has always been a more special place for the prince than the princess, and, in the wake of their separation, more than ever it will be his spiritual home. He hopes it may one day become a model of environmental soundness.

In 1981, the prince asked Intermediate Technology's power division for an appraisal of energy use and renewable energy options at Highgrove. In 1989, he commissioned a full energy survey of Kensington Palace and Highgrove. Many of the recommendations by surveyors Halcrow Gilbert are now in place.

Window sills and doorways have been draught-proofed and disused chimneys blocked to keep in heat. Low-energy light bulbs have been widely installed and central heating controls and thermostats renewed. The prince would have liked to introduce straw-fired central heating, but this proved impractical: partly because the straw would have to be gathered from too far afield, and partly because such a system requires a steady output rather than the fluctuating demand at Highgrove.

The survey also recommended adapting the swimming pool heating system from electricity to oil. The conversion cost was deemed appropriate because oil represents a saving of both money and energy. Using high-grade energy, such as electricity, for low-grade heating is not only inefficient but is more harmful because of the rate of emissions at electrical power stations. A Friends of the Earth spokesman said: "Anyone who has an electrically heated pool should consider changing to oil or gas."

One leading innovation at Highgrove is its reed-bed sewage disposal system. This



Vision: the Prince of Wales

pumps sewage through reeds and willows, whose roots absorb nutrients and water; perforated pipes underneath them keep the beds aerated and act as drains to discharge the effluent on to the willow bed, where the roots continue to clean it. To the untrained eye it looks like a pond, and there is no bad smell.

The two end-products are clean water and sludge, which builds up on the bed and — being full of nutrients and organic matter — merely makes the reeds grow better. The only input is the electricity needed to pump away the water because the bed is on flat ground. However, the prince hopes to make it entirely natural by harnessing solar power to drive the pump.

With water and waste issues high on the agenda, sprinklers are spurned at Highgrove, and only those plants that really need it are manually watered. The prince has looked into collecting rain-water from the rooftops and channelling it into an underground storage site. An existing store, from the days before running water, is being examined to see if it can be salvaged. Anxious that trees should not degenerate through cross-breeding, the prince imported large numbers of uncorrupted saplings to plant around his land. He is interested in biomass production, which involves planting fast-growing trees, such as willows and

poplars, and harvesting them on a short-rotation coppice system. The timber is then chipped and used as fuel. He wants to see unfertilised copse with a mix of tree types.

As proof that he gives more than a hoot about wildlife, the prince recently delayed the re-roofing of a barn, so as not to disturb owls nesting inside. He has been hatching a scheme to restore threatened barn owls to Gloucestershire. Many offspring have now been bred and he hopes that Highgrove's conducive habitat will encourage enough short-tailed field voles to complete the food chain and thus support the owls.

In view of the prince's "healthy suspicion of relying on chemicals", it is no surprise that all his gardens are organically cultivated. Now the Home Farm attached to Highgrove, which runs on the age-old practice of crop rotation, is in the process of going organic. Roughly half the 1,000 acres are Soil Association approved, and the farm should be wholly organic by 1995. The farm produces organic wholemeal flour, which is baked into Highgrove's own-label bread and biscuits.

So what can we commoners, with our limited means and influence, do to help the planet? We can, no doubt, waste less. Terence Tovey, of Halcrow Gilbert, says: "There is no energy bill that can't be reduced by 10 per cent, and if you haven't made any adjustments in the past three or four years, then it can probably be cut by 30 per cent." A simple checklist usually starts with roof and water-tank insulation, draught-proofing and double-glazing.

Switching to low-energy light bulbs is perhaps the single most eco-friendly move individuals can make. Simon Roberts of Friends of the Earth says: "These may cost more, say £10-£12 each, but



The good earth: Highgrove House in Gloucestershire is a testbed for environmentally sound management practices and organic farming methods

they last about eight times longer and use only 20 per cent of the electricity of a standard bulb."

Obviously, a large royal household expends much more energy than most of ours do. But given that this is expected of the heir to the throne, he is using his position to further ecological causes with the utmost integrity. If, by his vision and example, he leads us to pastures new and sources renewable, then he will have done the country a sovereign service.

Highgrove: Portrait of an Estate will be published next March by Chappman. "How to be a friend of the Earth" and "Don't throw it all away" are both produced by Friends of the Earth, 26-28 Underwood Street, London N1 7JQ (071-490 1555). For household advice about energy, contact "Helping the earth begins at home", PO Box 200, Stratford-on-Avon, Warwickshire CV37 9ZZ (0245 247347).

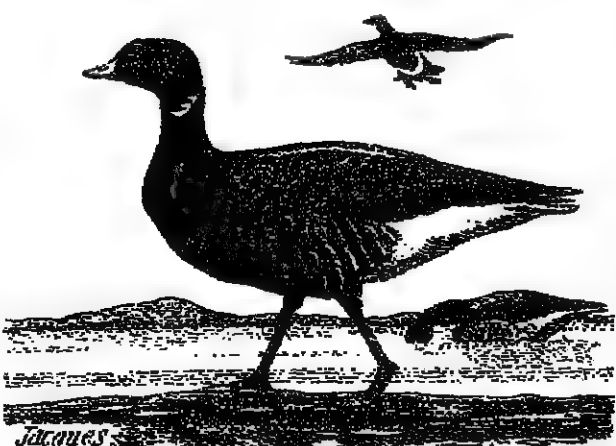
## Winter feast on the estuary

Feather report

ON THE east coast estuaries, the sandbanks disappear and emerge again with the movements of the tides. But if they are there on a winter's morning, there will almost certainly be some brent geese resting on them. These are quite small geese, which came down from Siberia in October. They fly fast, with necks stretched out, and look very dark in the air except for their white sterns; but when they are walking, you can distinguish the black head and neck, with its slight white collar, from the greyer back and underparts.

They feed by preference on the eel-grass that grows along muddy shores, dipping their necks gracefully into the water to pluck it. However, since they have grown commoner in Britain in recent years, they have also taken to feeding in the pastures at dusk or on a moonlit night. As they fly in, they give an eerie barking cry, and farmers are not entirely pleased to hear them coming.

A more down-like bird that may well be out on the sandbank with them is a shelduck. If the brents are rather duck-like geese, the shelduck is rather geese-like duck. They have bottle-green heads and bright red legs and beaks, and black-and-white bodies with a broad orange breast-band. They waddle in



Duck-like: the brent goose comes from Siberia in October

a rather grotesque, shoulder-shrugging way.

There is a flash of white on the open water. It is the light catching the breast of a great crested grebe as it dives. These grebes seek sheltered sea bays and estuaries when the lakes start to freeze. By now they have lost their chestnut ruffs, and are slimmer-looking birds, silvery-white and black.

The waders that winter on the estuary are even more affected by the tides than the waterfowl. A wide stretch of sand where hundreds of them were gulping down small morsels of seafood disappears under water, and the waves beat on the sea wall. They may have a long way to go before they can find another feeding

place. But as the hours pass, and the sea slowly retreats, they come back — shooting in over the water, lifting their wings for a moment above their heads, then settling down to eat again.

Where there are salt-marshes and grazing fields just in from the sea, redshanks are usually quite common. A wild string of notes, panicked in tone yet beautiful in timbre, is how you are first likely to detect them. Then a small flock hurries past, all flickering white above, when they land on a stretch of mud, they bob nervously, and their long red legs are conspicuous. Oystercatchers are also very noisy, with sharp, ventriloquial piping calls that ring out

over the shore. They are large pied waders, with long red bills and pink legs, and sometimes feed in enormous flocks.

The small waders work more silently. Along the water's edge there will almost certainly be dunlin, going in and out of the last shallow inches of the turning waves. On some stretches of coast, the pale sandpipers and the stout knots are common, on others they are hardly ever seen.

FINALLY, one very different bird of the shore that appears when winter gets hard — the snow bunting. It is not so white now as it is in its summer home on the mountain slopes of Iceland, but when two or three of them flit by they look quite like snowflakes. It is the weed seeds of the shore that interest them; and I have once seen a snow bunting foraging by a pool where only an inch or two away a dunlin was wading. Birds with very contrasting ways of life — but both finding the refuge and the food they need on a British estuary.

DERWENT MAY

What's about: Birds — check local gull flocks on inland reservoirs and rubbish tips for rarities. Twitchers — rushy warbler at Padstow, Cornwall; Forster's tern at Millisle, N. Ireland; Kentish plover at Fizewood, Lancashire. Details from Birdline, 0891 700222.

**"GREAT FAMILY FUN AND LIKELY TO BE THE BOX OFFICE HIT THIS CHRISTMAS. HIGHLY RECOMMENDED"**

- LWT NEWS

**"Masterly performances by Kermit and Miss Piggy. Michael Caine is a fine miserly Scrooge"**

- RALPH NORMAN, FILM 92

**"A real Christmas cracker"**

- HUGO DAVENPORT, DAILY TELEGRAPH



WALT DISNEY PICTURES — JIM HENSON PRODUCTIONS

**The Muppet Christmas Carol**

WALT DISNEY PICTURES — JIM HENSON PRODUCTIONS — THE MUPPET CHRISTMAS CAROL — KERMIT THE FROG — MISS PIGGY — THE GREAT GUNDO — BEZDO THE RAT — POZZE BEAR — MICHAEL CAINE — DAVE GOZZ — STEVE WHITFIRE — JERRY NELSON — FRANK OZ — PAUL WILLIAMS — PHILIP GOODMAN — DAVID BARKER — TALL SHADZOWS — JOHN FENNER — MICHAEL JARLOW A.C.E. — JERRY JORD — FRANK OZ — JERRY JORD — BRIAN HENSON — MARTIN G. BAKER — BRIAN HENSON — SHANE THE MAGIC — JIM HENSON PRODUCTIONS — LIMITED ADULTS & CHILDREN — DISNEY PICTURES

**AT CINEMAS EVERYWHERE NOW**



# Christmas in an instant

Frances Bissell, The Times cook, offers a festive meal without turning on the oven



NOT everybody wants a thoroughly organised Christmas, minutely planned to the last mince pie, the spare roll of foil and allocation of washing-up duties. There is no need to feel guilty if you did not order your bird weeks ago or make your pudding on Stir-up Sunday, and no need to panic if you have not yet drawn up on graph paper your countdown to the Christmas meal.

Although I will happily spend days shopping and cooking, I know that not everybody can or chooses to. With my plan for the Christmas meal, you do not even need to put the oven on. The dishes are easy to prepare, full of flavour and eye appeal, and entirely seasonal and festive.

If Christmas would not be Christmas without a turkey, but you do not relish wrestling with a mammoth and dealing with the inevitable cold leftovers, dismantle the bird into its separate parts. The breast alone will make an ample meal cooked in the way I have described. Pomegranates and hazelnuts may not appeal as much to you as they do to me. I have also marinated turkey in white wine and extra virgin olive oil and grilled it as described, which is good, but I like the garnish of deep, red pomegranate seeds and the sweet yet slightly acidic note that the juice imparts to the sauce in a way that does not interfere with the wine. This is an important consideration, since one wants to bring out the best bottles at Christmas.

I shall happily drink champagne before the meal and with the first course. With the main course, I hope to persuade my husband, Tom, to open a bottle of fine claret, such as our last bottle of 1975 Chateau Biscous, one of this chateau's best ever vintages and which you can still obtain from Corney & Barrow, 12 Helmet Row, London EC1V 3QJ (071-251 4051). With the ice, we shall drink a Moscato d'Asti or Asti

Spumante, which I shall serve with almond biscuits.

For starters today, here is a recipe I wrote down in my brother's kitchen recently when I was in Hong Kong. He cooked an impromptu dinner for us from ingredients he had bought on his way home from work.

**Warm leek and smoked salmon salad**  
(serves 4 to 6)  
1 lb/340g slim, young leeks  
1 lb/110g button, cap or oyster mushrooms  
extra virgin olive oil  
small salad leaves  
1 lb/230g smoked salmon  
lemon juice to taste  
freshly ground black pepper  
black olives for garnish

Peel and trim the leeks, and slice them. Rinse them thoroughly, and drain them. Wipe and slice the mushrooms, or if oyster mushrooms, tear them into wedges. Heat the oil in a frying pan, two to three tablespoons will be sufficient, and gently cook the leeks until wilted and almost tender. Add the mushrooms, and continue cooking until just done. Meanwhile, arrange salad leaves on serving plates. Cut the smoked salmon into strips, and quickly toss it with the leeks and mushrooms in the pan before spooning it on to the plate. Season with lemon juice and black pepper, and pour the cooking juices over the salad before serving. Add the black olives.

A variation of this replaces the leeks and mushrooms with slim green beans and waxy salad potatoes, which are steamed or boiled instead of fried.

**Marinated grilled turkey escalopes with pomegranates and hazelnut sauce**  
(serves 4)

4 or 8 escalopes cut from the turkey breast, about 1 1/2 lb/680g altogether  
2 ripe red pomegranates  
1/2 pt/70ml hazelnut oil  
3 in/7.5 cm rind of lemon zest  
3 in/7.5 cm piece of cinnamon stick

4 or 5 cloves  
crushed seeds of 8 cardamom pods  
freshly ground black pepper  
1/2 pt/140ml turkey stock  
1 tsp ground hazelnut  
freshly grated lemon zest  
toasted blanched, lightly crushed hazelnuts

Cut the pomegranates in half, and squeeze out the juice, leaving the seeds of one half for decoration. Whisk with the hazelnut oil and pomegranate juice to blend the two, and pour it over the meat. Add the lemon zest and spices, including the ground pepper. Cover and marinate for several hours, or overnight if more convenient. Remove the meat from the marinade, and dry it on paper towels. Put the marinade into a saucepan, bring to the boil, skim the foam from the surface, and simmer it for five minutes. Strain into a clean saucepan, add the stock, bring to the boil, and simmer while you grill the turkey, placing it on an oiled rack under a hot grill, or on a well-

seasoned or oiled cast-iron grill or griddle. Turn once only, and do not overcook the meat. Cooking time will depend on the thickness of the escalopes, but the juices should run clear and not pink. Put to one side when cooked, and finish the sauce by reducing it to a well-flavoured gravy. Stir in the ground hazelnuts, and add salt to taste at this stage, if you wish, or allow guests to add their own. Put the turkey on a serving platter. Scatter the pomegranate seeds, lemon zest and crushed hazelnuts on top, and spoon the sauce over it.

This slightly spicy, slightly sweet turkey goes well with couscous, bulgur wheat, mashed potatoes or a number of rice dishes, including wild rice, a white risotto, or a fluffy plait of Basmati rice. For vegetables, I would serve stewed celery hearts.

**Cheese crisps**  
For as many cheese crisps as you want, cut 1 in/2.5 cm cubes of Gruyère, Jarlsberg, Comté or other similar hard cheese. Place on a

lined baking sheet with plenty of space between to allow for spreading, and bake for three to five minutes in the top half of a hot oven at 200C/400F, gas mark 6. The cheese will melt and will then harden as it cools on emerging from the oven and can be lifted off the baking sheet. Plain, these make very good snacks with drinks. Prepared in the following way, you can turn them into a very impressive cheese course.

**Goat's cheese crisps and salad**  
(serves 4)

7 oz/200g goat's cheese log  
16 cheese crisps, made as previously described  
small salad leaves, such as rocket, mache (lamb's lettuce), baby spinach, herbs and watercress  
walnut oil and sherry vinegar dressing

Take the ends and rind off the goat's cheese, and divide into 8 slices. Put one slice between two cheese crisps, and arrange two of these on each plate with a little dressed salad.

**Tangerine granita**  
(serves 4 to 6)  
1 tsp fresh lemon juice  
1 pt/570ml fresh tangerine juice  
1/2 pt/70ml water

Mix, freeze and stir from time to time until the mixture has a grainy, coarse texture. Serve immediately.

**Tangerine sorbet**  
(serves 6 to 8)

1 tsp fresh lemon juice  
1/2 pt/70ml water  
10 oz/280g sifted icing sugar  
1 pt/570ml fresh tangerine juice

Mix the lemon juice, water and icing sugar, and stir until the sugar has dissolved. Add the tangerine juice, and freeze in a sorbetière or ice-cream maker, or in a container placed in the freezer or ice-making compartment of the refrigerator. If using the latter method, stir the mixture from time to time as it freezes to ensure a smooth sorbet. The last stirring, when the mixture is almost hard, can be done in a food processor.

**Tangerine ice-cream**  
(serves 6)  
1/2 pt/280ml single cream  
6 oz/170g caster sugar  
1 tsp grated tangerine zest  
3 free-range egg yolks  
1/2 pt/430ml tangerine juice, chilled

Bring the cream, sugar and tangerine zest to the boil, and pour it over the egg yolks, whisking continuously. Return the mixture to the saucepan, and cook over a very low heat, but without boiling and curdling the mixture, until the custard thickens and coats the back of a spoon. Remove from the heat, pour into a bowl, cool, then cover and refrigerate overnight to let the flavour ripen. Next day, mix with the tangerine juice, and freeze as described in the sorbet recipe. This, like all ices and sorbets, is best made for immediate eating, as the flavour and texture deteriorates with keeping.

Frances Bissell's wine "cellar", page 11

## Eat up your greenies

Israeli scientists have developed a nutritious form of duckweed which they hope will be the food of the future

I have seen the future, and it involves your eating duckweed.

Lacking large territory for agricultural crops, Israel has been obliged to take the lead in experimenting with new and potentially highly profitable foodstuffs. One of the most promising, which the Israelis are hoping to bring on to the market very quickly, is *lemna*, the water lentil, or, as the marketing men have renamed it, "greenies".

Greenies are simply an improved strain of duckweed, developed by Dr Dan Porath of Ben-Gurion University, Beer Sheva, in his role as scientific adviser to Kibbutz Tsora. Mulik Rivlin, of the kibbutz, says Dr Porath developed greenies over 18 months by isolating the best from more than 1,000 clones of duckweed gathered from around the world.

"They can be eaten fresh, cooked, or dried," says Mr Rivlin. "They have a very good shelf-life, and will keep fresh for two weeks. Already we have developed more than 30 recipes using them. You can have a greenies omelette, and use greenies in salads or cream and cheese dips. Dried, they

### FOOD SPY



make a green wholemeal that can be used as a flour substitute for children who are allergic to gluten. They are very low in calories, but 40 per cent protein in their dry state. The crop we can get off just 100 sq m of water is hard to believe. I am sure this is the future of biotechnology, for getting a huge amount of nutritional value out of a very small area."

Fresh greenies are green

globules, like enlarged lobes of the duckweed you might see cloaking a pond or stream in summer. They are crunchy with a slight metallic tang, mildly suggestive of a marriage between watercress and bean sprouts.

Already supermarkets and specialist food shops in Israel are selling greenies, and customers have been flocking back for more. Mr Rivlin says: "We hope soon to be selling abroad. At a recent food show in Israel there was interest from Japan, eastern Europe, Germany, France, Italy and England. We have already sent samples to Marks & Spencer."

If greenies do succeed internationally, they will take their place in a well-established line of Israeli introductions. It was the Israelis who first developed a commercial procedure for removing the astringency from persimmons, giving the world sharon fruit. The Galia melon was an Israeli invention and is now an international bestseller.

The Israelis are further planning to develop desert truffles, as enjoyed by bushmen in the Kalahari desert, into a commercial commodity. Although desert truffles are not as aromatic as European ones, they can be baked like potatoes and are said to be good for virility.

The Israelis also harbour hopes of becoming big in custard apples, with a variety called Gefner. The cultivar was obtained by back-crossing cherimoya from the high Andes with atemoya, which was itself a chance hybrid between cherimoya and a sugar apple from the low tropical plains of central America.

Gefner, smooth, sweet, juicy and firm, is reckoned to have the right balance of acidity and sweetness for the commercial success which eluded all its ancestors.

However, going by the example of the sharon fruit and the Galia, Israel can expect no more than five years monopoly of anything it introduces. After that, it could be greenies for all.

ROBIN YOUNG



Happy to be himself: Michael Barry on television is Michael Bukht at home, where as many as 19 might sit down for a meal in the kitchen

## Catering for a tidal wave of family

ENTERTAINING AT HOME

Michael Barry

before they were ready — that my father was growing. I washed them, put them in the oven and tried various toppings. Amazingly, the potatoes were not hard, but the hammering I got was.

Apart from family, we often have friends round for supper in the kitchen. We always ask people we are fairly certain will like each other. The perfect party for me is having a whole lot of people who know each other and a whole lot of people who do not and who all find each other fascinating and have to be thrown out of the

house at two in the morning. Occasionally, we clean up the dining-room and have a rather more formal meal for eight or ten. It is always a five-course meal with classic French food. On these occasions, my wife does the table decoration.

I shop wherever I happen to be — Sainsbury's, Waitrose, Safeway, Marks & Spencer. As for wine, I have very little interest in the stuff. I have no objection to other people enjoying it, but I do not drink at all.

One thing I really hate is

background music. I think it is gross. Conversation is what dinner is supposed to be about. What I do rather like, though, is having a small concert or recital at the end of dinner. My wife, a dancer, is particularly interested in baroque, Elizabethan and Renaissance dances, so sometimes we have what is known as the Wals Band — the old name for a group of players.

Sadly, we do not get asked back as often as we might. People are scared to reciprocate. It is so stupid: I do not go to their houses to mark

them out of ten. Actually, I am very partial to a fried egg sandwich.

**Michael Bukht's desperately easy Thai-style chicken**  
(serves 4)

1 1/2 lb boned chicken  
4 oz button mushrooms  
2 in of coconut cream  
Spice mixture

2 cloves garlic  
small onion  
2 tsp coriander powder  
1/2-1 tsp chilli powder

a couple of stalks each of lemon grass and Galangale (a kind of ginger) or, failing that, an inch and a half fresh ginger

grated rind and juice of a lime  
1 tsp dark brown sugar

Put coconut cream into a large pan. Bring to the boil. Put all the spice ingredients into a blender (add water if necessary) and give them a thorough zongking. Add this mixture to the coconut cream and bring to the boil, simmering gently for ten minutes until the oil comes out. Add the chicken, cut into walnut-size pieces, and the washed, trimmed but not peeled mushrooms, and stir until the chicken is cooked. I always add a teaspoon of shrimp paste as well, but this is optional. Serve with rice.

● Michael Bukht is programme controller of Classic FM. As Michael Barry, he is a co-presenter of BBC2's Food and Drink programme.

### A feast of food in art

IF IT is true that we eat first with our eyes, then a banquet awaits visitors to the Llewellyn Alexander Gallery in Waterloo (Frances Bissell writes). From now until December 31, more than 200 paintings, oils, watercolours, pastels and miniatures by 30 British artists will depict every aspect of food — including Edna Bizon's meticulously

detailed oils of oysters and champagne next to slices of fresh lemons. Provence by Roger Shantz, John Woolmer's French vineyards, and Breton and Cornish fishing scenes by Catherine Ogden. Prices range from £150 to £4,000 (Llewellyn Alexander Fine Paintings, 124-126 The Cut, Waterloo, London SE1 8LN; 071-620 1322).

**PIERMONT**  
— Serve Chilled —

Sparkling Spring Water  
With Pure Apple Juice

**After Piermont,  
everything else is just water.**



## Odds-on winners at the off-licence

No time for supermarket queues and mail order wine supplies? Relax. Your nearest off-licence opens late, usually offers free glass loan and local delivery plus case discounts, as well as taking big orders on a sale or return basis. All you have to do is to decide which of the season's wines listed below you fancy with the festive feast.

### ● ODDBINS

**Festive fizz:** 1988 Argyle Pinot Noir Chardonnay £9.99, £8.56 if you buy seven bottles.

Brian Croser's zesty, smoky Oregon fizz upstages, according to some, his masterly Australian sparkling.

**Festive white:** 1990 Cosme Palacio y Hermanos Rioja, £4.69.

Astonishingly good, all-purpose festive white rioja whose gloriously juicy, smoky oak flavour is oozing with fruit. An elegant, classic, peachy-smoky alternative to the dry 1990 Château Doisy-Daëne Sec.

**Festive red:** 1984 Château Cantemerle, Margaux £7.99.

Fifth growth Margaux and, despite an off vintage, it shows deliciously fragrant and cedary claret with warmth and fruit. Cheaper is the superb pure, smoky, raspberry fruit of Chapoutier's 1990 Crozes-Hermitage. Les Meysonnières (£7.49).

**Festive sticky:** 1990 Vouvray Moelleux Grande Année, Domaine des Aubuisières, £7.99.

Grand, softly sweet, non sticky Loire white whose wonderful rich, waxy, mineral style goes equally well with rich pâtés and light puddings.

**● THRESHER, WINE RACK, BOTTOMS UP**

**Festive fizz:** Hamm Premier Cru Brut, £14.99.

Pleasant, light, waxy-apple style makes this exclusive Thresher group champagne worth tracking down.

**Festive white:** 1990 Rolly Gassmann Auserrois, £7.99.

Magnificent, classy Alsace white whose smoky-spicy style and rich, citrusy, almost grapefruit taste would go down well with goose or duck.

Alsace wine lovers should look out too, at Wine Rack only, for the splendid ripe, opulent, spicy, violet scented 1990 Zind-Humbrecht Riesling, Turckheim (£9.39).

**Festive red:** 1990 Saintsbury Pinot Noir, Carnaros, £11.49.

The sweet, soft, juicy plum and damson fruit of this top California red should bring out the best in turkey.

**Festive sticky:** 1983 Dow, £15.99.

By no means the cheapest source of vintage port but this spicy, plummy, fruit cake-like sticky is so good with stilton, I forgive them. If half-bottles of a Christmas sticky are what you are after, then try the light, sweet, aniseedy 1989 Domaine Coteaux Nativelle for £5.69.

**● THE VICTORIA WINE COMPANY**

**Festive fizz:** 1983/6 Victoria Wine Champagne, £15.99.

Splash out on either the delicious, deep, nutty '83 or elegant, toasty '86. This year's best, cheap, vintage High Street champagne. Alternatively, try Victoria Wine's excellent, fresh, waxy-biscuity non-vintage, pinot meunier-

### Jane MacQuitty picks out the best wine buys at your local branch

dominated Paul d'Hurville champagne. Still good value, though now £9.99, not £8.99.

**Festive white:** 1991 Shingle Peak, Marlborough Sauvignon, £4.99.

The Spence brothers of Matua Valley make this zesty, gooseberry and elderflower-like aperitif and festive fish wine exclusively for Vie Wine.

**Festive red:** 1985 Château Maucaillou, Moulis, £10.29.

Ripe, rich, elegant green pepper claret style makes Maucaillou a winner. Serve with York or Wiltshire cured ham, and even turkey.

**Festive sticky:** Yalumba Museum Show Reserve Muscat, Rutherglen, £6.89 half bottle.

Australians drool over the "intense raisined fruit" of sweet liqueur muscats such as this, and so should you. Drink with Christmas pudding.

**● MAJESTIC WINE WAREHOUSES**

**Festive fizz:** 1983 Shadow Creek Brut, £5.99.

Deep burnt toast bouquet and full, creamy lemony fruit make this equal pinot noir and chardonnay fizz from California a £5.99 star. Majestic's own simple, fruity J. de Telmont Grande Réserve Brut (£12.99) is an acceptable alternative.

**Festive white:** 1991 Sauvignon de Haut Poitou, £4.29.

A useful dry white Christmas standby whose fresh, zesty, herbaceous, gooseberry-laden style makes a good aperitif and smoked salmon wine.

**Festive red:** 1988 Penfolds Bin 389 South Australia Cabernet Shiraz, £6.99.

Stupendous cassis, bramble, loganberry and eucalyptus Australian mouthful should be downed with game dishes such as jugged hare and venison. Alternatively, try Majestic's 1990 Domaine de Fauterie Saint Joseph (£7.99), a gorgeous, soft, spice bramble cassis, and violet-charged Rhône.

**Festive sticky:** Lustau Almacenista Oloroso Viejo de Jerez, Viuda de Antonio Borrego, £11.99.

Perfect old, ripe, nutty Christmas sherry to drink with mince pies and before church. Intriguing dry yet sweet style.

**● DAVISONS**

**Festive fizz:** 1986 Charles Ellner, £16.99.

Satisfyingly rich, nutty champagne with an attractive perfumed finish shows that this family-run chain knows its stuff.

**Festive white:** 1991 Châteauneuf-du-Pape Blanc, Domaine Font de Michelle, £12.50.

Top white Rhône like this rich, elegant, lemon and lime scented wine deserve a place at the Christmas table, especially with smoked starters.

**Festive red:** 1988 Savignyles-Beaune, Domaine Pavelot, £9.99.

Almost any '88 burgundy listed here would go down well on Christmas day, but this more robust plummy Savigny is the best value for money.

### Best Christmas wine books

● Michael Broadbent's Pocket Guide to Wine Vintages (Mitchell Beazley, £6.99).

Scholarly, easy-access vintage information from the head of Christie's wine department. Includes cluds and delights from classic French regions to the New World's best, together with top Austrian and Hungarian vintages, plus the tops from the Iberian peninsula.

● The Grapes of Ralph by Ralph Steadman (Ebury Press, £19.99).

Steadman's weird and wacky world of wine; great illustrations and intriguing text, much of which appeared first in Oddbins' wine lists. Look out here for such eccentric stuff as The Great American Wine Slob, plus wine wanderings in Chile, Peru and Lanzarote.

● Cyril Ray's Compleat Imbibery No 16 (Mitchell Beazley, £16.99).

1992's most stylishly written fireside and bedroom table wine tales, edited by the late, great Cyril Ray. No 16 includes such gastro-treats as Hemingway on hunger, Peter Langan on drinking, Laurie Lee

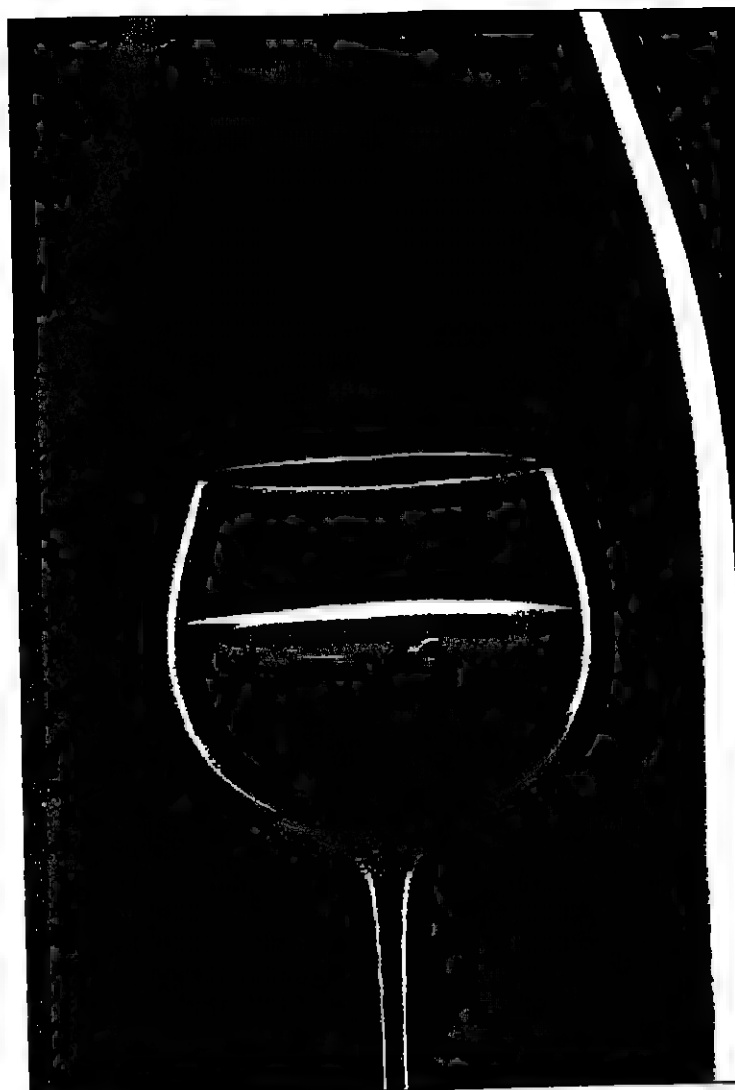
and a Spanish tavern, plus Cyril Ray on Mouton-Rothschild, champagne, Pétrus et al.

● The Art and Science of Wine by James Halliday and Hugh Johnson (Mitchell Beazley, £19.99).

1992's best wine book: expert, well written, concise guide to winemaker's choices in vineyard and cellar. Dedicated to the genie in the bottle, this instructive book nonetheless goes a long way to demystifying the various processes, options and results that can take place in the vineyard, the winery and finally the bottle. Wine buffs only.

● Chardonnay by Tim Atkin (Viking, £13.99).

Dense gazetteer approach, as is the rest of this grape-by-grape series, but still an enjoyable read on the world's most fashionable variety, described by Atkin as Madama, Princess Diana and Jerry Hall all rolled into one. According to Atkin, "great chardonnay is all about nuance and complexity", and he tours the world in search of it, most diligently in France, California and Australia.



### Best food books for Christmas

● The Tenth Muse by Sir Harry Luke (The Rubicon Press, £12.95).

Re-edition of his writings on culinary matters, amassed over a period of years as a British diplomat, and first published in 1954. Exuberant pleasure in the subject, eclectic tastes and a scholarly precision when it comes to acknowledging the source of every single recipe, down to "HCL's Georgian cook, British Mission, Tiflis", give this a high rating in the enjoyment scale. Most of the recipes are quite accessible.

● What's Cooking by Marguerite Patten (Hawker Publications, £13.95).

More culinary biographical writing, aptly sub-titled "recipes of a lifetime". Her career in food spans 60 years, and the first part of the book describes her work as a cookery demonstrator before and during the second world war, when she was employed by the Ministry of Food to show people how to make the most of limited food rations. Many of the recipes are spot on for today's budget-conscious times.

● The New Pauper's Cookbook by Jocasta Innes and Kate Harris (Vermilion, £8.99).

A different book to the one which first appeared in 1970. It has a whole new chapter on pasta and one on vegetarian recipes, and a much expanded chapter on one-pot meals, including the onion, bacon and potato hotpot which was a favourite dish during the early 1970s and deserves to be passed on to a new generation.

● The Memsahib's Cookbook by Rhona Aitken (Plunkett, £10.99) and The Medieval Cookbook by Maggie Black (British Museum Press, £14.95).

Two books that provide us with a little escapism through cookery. The first is an evocative collection of recipes of Anglo-Indian cookery by a latter-day memsahib in Ceylon in the 1940s and 50s. The ingredients, with very few exceptions, such as tamarind pulp, are readily available, and the recipes are not at all complicated. The same is true of the medieval recipes, which have been glossed and adapted admirably for the modern cook. The pork roast with spiced wine, for example, would make a fine new year's dish, which you can follow with fried fig pastries or a cream custard tart flavoured with saffron.

● Spain on a Plate by Maria Jose Sevilla (BBC, £14.95).

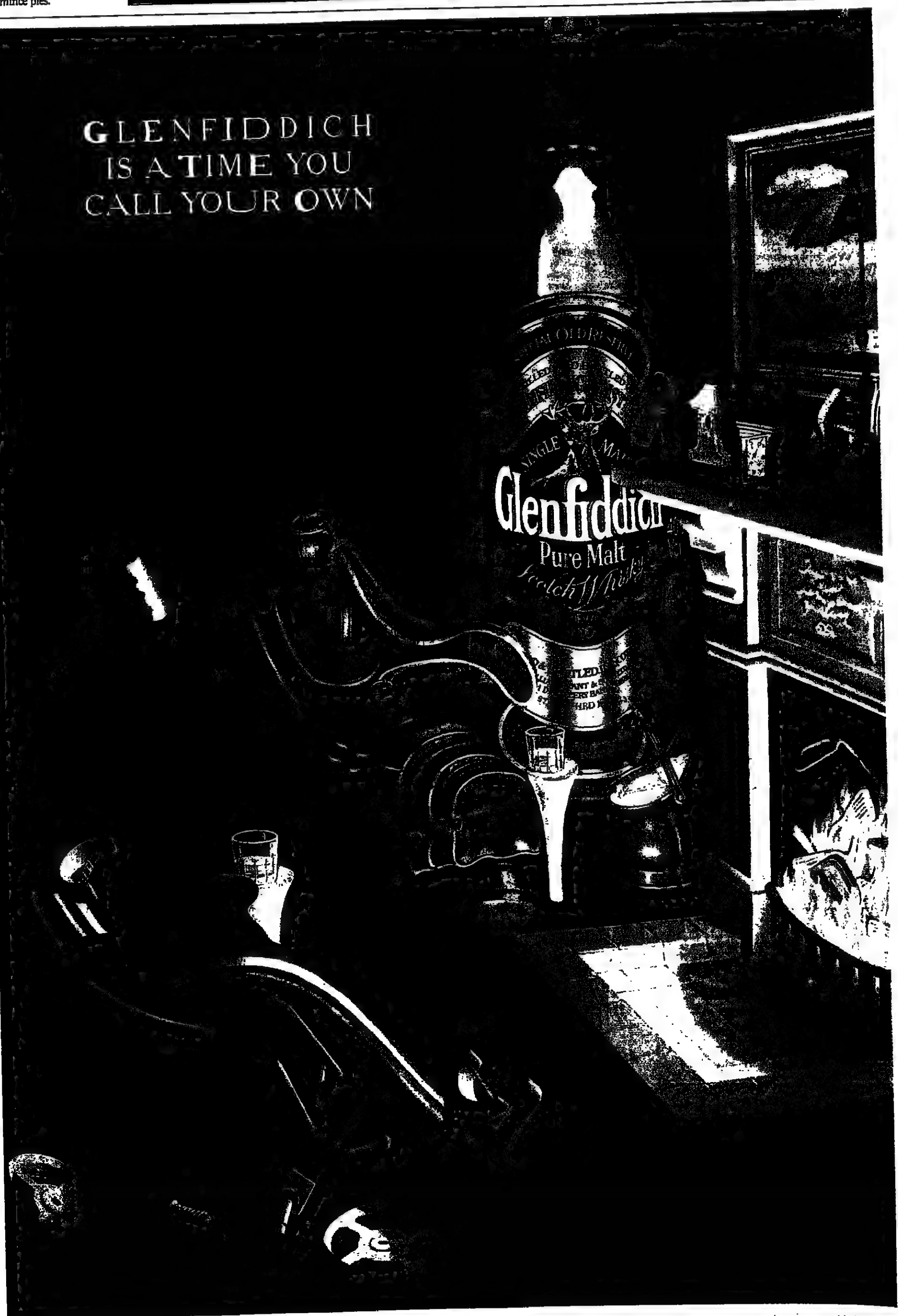
Authentic, comprehensive and delightfully set in context, of all the crop of inevitable Spanish cookbooks this year, I like this best.

● The Essentials of Classic Italian Cooking by Marcella Hazan (Macmillan, £20).

Worth the price for the short bread chapter alone, where focaccia and its regional variations are explained in sufficient detail for even the novice breadmaker to succeed. If I kept only one book from all the new ones I have seen this year, this would be it.

FRANCES BISSELL

GLENFIDDICH  
IS A TIME YOU  
CALL YOUR OWN





## MY PERFECT WEEKEND

MARGARET FORSTER

Novelist

Where would you go? I hate travelling, so my idea of a perfect weekend would be not having to go anywhere. I would stay in the hamlet of Loweswater in Cumbria, where my husband, Hunter Davies, and I live and work for six months of the year.

Where would you stay? In our perfect house that we have had for five years. It is two different styles: the back is a Lake District farmhouse and the front an elegant Jane Austen house. It is beautifully proportioned and I love it.

Who would be your perfect companion? My husband, or any of my three children, but only if they were in the right mood. I wouldn't mind being absolutely solitary.

What essential piece of clothing would you take? I have my wellingtons here plus storm wear, but if the weekend was perfect, I wouldn't need them.

What would you eat? Raspberries, strawberries and peaches for breakfast; a picnic lunch of bread, cheese and apple; and for supper, which I would eat outside, I'd have grilled trout, tiny green beans, a crunchy salad of different lettuces, herbs and olives and summer pudding.

What would you drink? Chablis.

Which books would you take to read? The books I've got on the go at the moment. I am halfway through *Trollope* by Victoria Glendinning, and I've been sent an advance proof copy of *A Suitable Boy* by Vikram Seth. It is published in March and will be the new thrill for next year. At 1,400 pages, it is just the sort of length of book I like for a weekend.

What music would you listen to? I am virtually tone-deaf. Other people fantasise about their *Desert Island Discs* selection, but it would give me no trouble — silence please, eight times.



What luxury would you have? I'd like the telephone and my husband's ridiculous fax machine disconnected.

What piece of art would you like to have? I love our Sheila Fell paintings and never tire of walking into the living room and looking at them. They are landscapes of the northern Lake District.

Who would be your least welcome guest? Everyone would be unwelcome. How could it be a perfect weekend if there were guests?

What three things would you most like to do? 1. Climb Grasmere, the fell after which our house is named, and which looms over it. The view from the top is magnificent — three lakes, two tarns, mountain peaks of the Solway Firth. 2. Swim right out into the middle of Crummock Water. 3. Lie in the garden and read.

To whom would you send a postcard? To my daughter Caitlin in Botswana, asking: "How can you bear to give this up?"

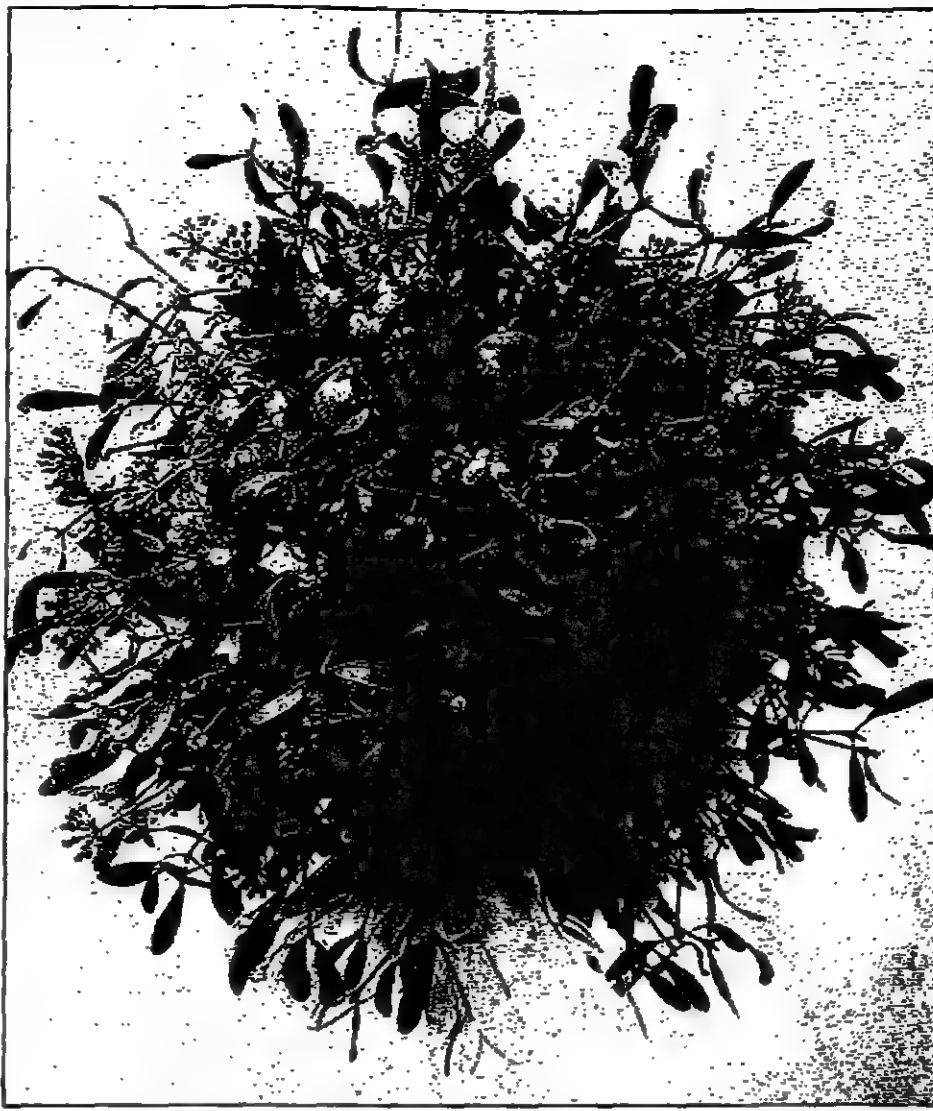
What souvenir would you bring home? Heather and flat stones from the Crummock Water beach.

Interview by Rosanna Greenstreet

# Deck the halls with boughs of anything

Francesca

Greenoak on the abundant winter foliage just waiting to be used in festive decorations



Make the most of seasonal plenty: above, Malcolm Hillier's mistletoe and tangerine ball; top right, the silvery spheres of honesty; right, holly *Ilex Lawsonia*

A week before Christmas, most of us scurry down our chilled gardens, chilled neither to left nor right. Malcolm Hillier is unusual, instead of shutting the garden out behind the curtains, he invites it in for full participation in the festive decoration. Twigs, evergreens, berries and fruits play their part together with imported cut flowers, dried flowers, ribbons and other artefacts.

I first visited Mr Hillier's garden in the summer several years ago to discuss flower arranging with garden plants. The season has shifted, but he shows equal inventiveness with the winter plants he uses in Christmas decorations. His London house (the past home of James Whistler, the painter and etcher) has a long, narrow garden, full of plants and ornaments: rosemary, myrtle and lilacs, with ivies, roses and jasmine trained over steps, arbours and colonnades.

For Christmas, Mr Hillier makes elaborate set-piece arrangements which combine sweet-smelling pine or fir foliage of ivies and variegated eucalyptus. He makes wreaths of densely-needed sprigs of fir (or more unusually skimmia) embellished with holly berries on long twigs with the leaves removed. An alternative, long-lasting outdoor decoration is constructed by securing several fir branches in a fan-shape with five holly stems (similarly debarked), decked with bows of red ribbon.

My favourites among the Hillier suggestions for indoors

are a hanging, bell-shaped holly decoration, and a striking mistletoe and baby tangerine orb. Both are based on wet foam blocks: 30cm high by 18cm square, carved into a cone for the bell; 15cm cube pushed in at the corners for the orb. Covered firmly with thick wire, with strong, thin mossing wire (available from florists) secured at the top to make a loop for hanging, they are ready for the short sprigs of foliage to be pressed in.

Mr Hillier used 120 sprigs

of berried holly for the bell. 1.5kg of mistletoe and 40 sprigs of flowering ivy for the orb. The tangerines are skewered and looped with wire and fixed to the inner structure. Ribbon is made into a bow at the base and wound around the top loop. A more economical version of the orb would use a greater proportion of ivy to mistletoe.

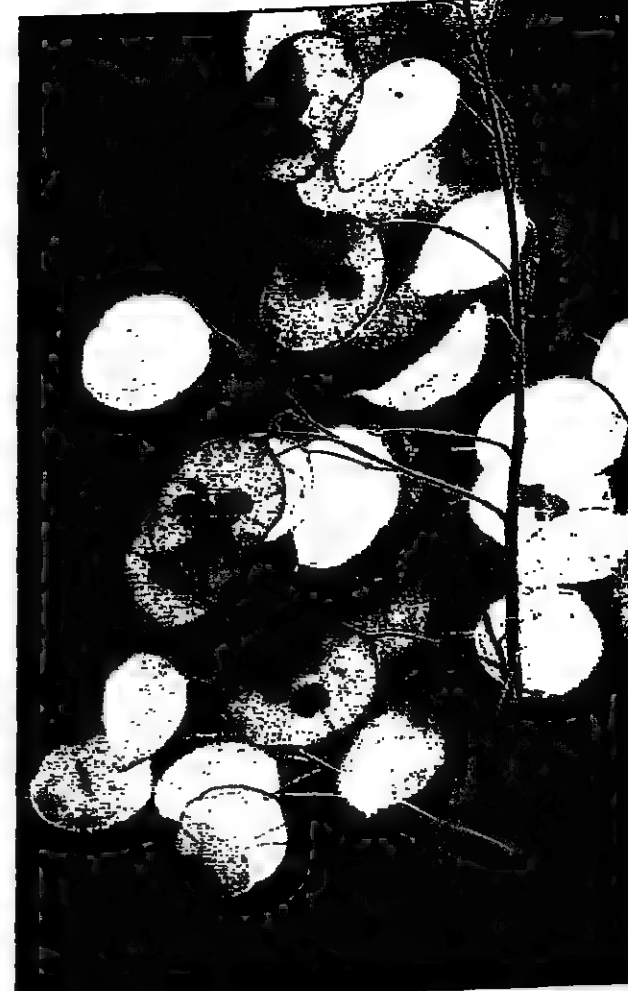
Unlike Mr Hillier, I did not, in the lush and plentiful months, look ahead to winter needs. Nevertheless, inspired by his example, and driven by the fact that the children, home from school and supercharged with excitement, are mad to get on with decorating, I took an unhelpful trawl around the garden.

It was not as bad as I feared; lovely beige-white stems of honesty, which make silvery mounds when the seeds and outer membranes are gently rubbed away; plenty of ivy and holly, some with berries; rosemary looking fresh and green; twigs from hazel and wiggly contorted hazel; beech with elegant long buds, and a few demure seedheads.

There are unexpected trophies in the form of small dark brown spirea seedheads and lump-dropping conical ones

in paler brown from the buddleias. There are some precious sweet violets, an assortment of hellebores and lots of fiercely fragrant winter honeysuckle. Variegated leaves from White Nancy, the best of the variegated lamiums, and lovely glossy dark rosemary and choysa foliage will set off the flowers.

Variegated ivy or holly can cover candle holders or be arranged at the base of the Christmas pudding or cake. Decorations can also be ad-



dition: use sugared flowers and fruits to ornament sweet deserts. Paint the surfaces of pansy, violet or primrose flowers, or mint leaves, with lightly beaten egg white, place them on a sheet of greaseproof paper and sieve icing sugar over them. They take two to three hours to dry in a warm place, and last several days.

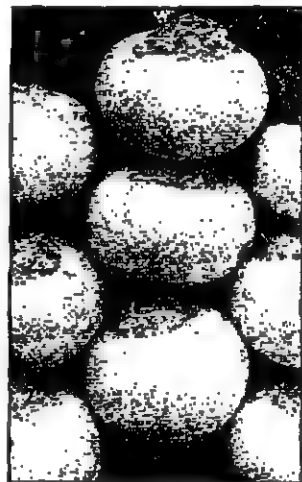
As the garden comes into the house, so decoration extends to the garden. After a recent trip to the United States, where exterior decora-

tion is very much in fashion, Mr Hillier returned with new enthusiasm for adorning the clipped holly and box in his front garden with Christmas lights. Special outdoor lights are available at most garden centres, and look pretty in evergreens or threaded through the bare branches of deciduous trees, and it is a pleasure which can be shared with every passer-by.

Malcolm Hillier's Christmas is published by Doring Kinderley (£12.99).

## BEST BUYS

AS A late Christmas present take out a subscription to The Royal Horticultural Society. The £27 membership (to RHS, 80 Vincent Square, London SW1 2PE) includes free entry to the shows at Vincent Square and RHS gardens, monthly issues of *The Garden* and garden advice. Indicate you are a *Times* reader to receive a free illustrated five-year garden diary. Membership for the Northern Horticultural Society (Craig Lane, Harrogate, N Yorks HG3 1QB) is £19 and includes the quarterly *Northern Gardener* and lectures.



Harvest time: turnips

## WEEKEND TIPS

- Check stored fruit and vegetables for signs of decay.
- Bring pots of bulbs indoors when flower buds are beginning to reveal colour.
- Continue to remove debris and dead leaves from ponds, rock gardens, troughs and sinks.
- Harvest turnips and store for use.
- Prune shrub roses which require shaping or some removal of old wood.
- Keep off the soil when it is wet, lightly fork and weed in dry, milder conditions.

## Little-Known Health 'Cures' Doctors Never Tell You

Most people know about the loss of bone mass associated with calcium deficiencies, but precious few are aware of the very severe health problems linked to other nutrient deficiencies. The fact is, mature adults can have at least 10 different deficiencies that can spell trouble, ranging from a lack of energy, mood swings and mental confusion...to joint pain, bruising and even cancer sores.

Now, thanks to a remarkable new health guide called "Little-Known Health Cures," you can feel more alive than you have in years. "Little-Known Health Cures" contains vital, health improving information taken from over 3000 scientific reports. It is based on medical research done by some of the most brilliant doctors and scientists in the world. Here's a small sample of the important material you discover:

- Which nutrients scientists say may help slow down aging at cell levels.
- Which common deficiency can make you lack energy and create mental confusion.
- What little-known nutrients can increase the efficiency of your fat burning metabolism.
- A list of nutrients that can help reduce cholesterol.
- What can enhance alertness and may improve memory.
- Which foods trigger headaches.
- Which 2 vitamin deficiencies a British researcher claims may be responsible for 20% of senility cases.

- Which vitamins may improve the body's immune factors.
- Which common breakfast drink may lead to gallstones.
- If you take high blood pressure medication you should know about this severe side effect.
- What allergy causes digestive problems like irritable bowels.
- A low intake of these 2 vitamins may lead to cancer.
- Which long term deficiency can lead to kidney stones.
- If you have arthritis or rheumatism, these 2 supplements may help.
- Special foods that protect against heart & circulation problems.
- Trembling muscles may be a symptom of this condition.
- Which long term deficiency can bring on asthma.
- This group of vitamins helps protect your image.
- People with diabetes have an elevated need for these nutrients.
- Certain skin problems may be triggered by these deficiencies.
- Borstids can be caused by a low intake of these 3 vitamins.
- Why some people are more likely to develop allergies.
- In bacterial cramps can be caused by this food.
- Everyone should know this natural sleep remedy.

- Which foods substitute is the principal carrier of pollutants.
  - Which popular beverage has been found to a loss of brain buds.
  - Which two vitamin deficiencies may be severe than most of all.
  - Which vitamins and mineral supplements anyone over 40 should be taking and in what amounts.
  - What are the best natural food sources of vitamins and minerals.
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## Alan Coren



Raindrops keep falling on my good deeds

"I can't get into someone's car, just like that," she said, after a bit. "You could be anybody."

It is difficult to know exactly how to compose your features so that the world would never take you for a mugger, a rapist, a serial cannibal. I showed her the parcel I had collected.

"Look," I said, "you can see my name and address on it."

We peered at the label together. The ink was beginning to run. She lifted the rim of her rainhood, but before she was able to complete her inspection, a man who had now arrived at the bus stop stepped forward and said: "Are you lost?"

"No," I said, "no, we're just looking at this label so that this lady can see where I live."

"He wants to give me a lift," she explained to the man. "In his car," she added; unnecessarily of course, except for those attuned to the sub-textual. Things said those three little syllables, can happen in cars. Doors can be locked, windows wound tight, seats suddenly reclined, radios turned up to drown shrieks, axe-blows, all that. It was the man's turn to look at me. He was in a hat. He did not need to be. He had a hat. He had a raincoat.

"What's this about a parcel?" he said, finally.

"This lady wanted proof of who I was," I said.

"Only reasonable," he said, "these days. Not," he continued, to her, "that the parcel proves anything. It's like when people say they're from the Gas Board etcetera, they have badges and cards and everything, and the next thing you know, well...not," and here he turned back to me, "that I'm saying anything. I'm sure you're above board. I'm sure this lady doesn't have anything to worry about."

"Well, you say that," said the elderly woman, "but he didn't ask me where I was going. I thought that was a bit funny."

"You can see her point," said the man. "Oh, for God's sake," I said. "I would have asked her where she was going after she said whether or not she wanted a lift."

"I'd go along with that," said the man, to the woman. "Makes sense." I thought, I really can't thump this saccunious bastard, my only witness would be the old woman, she already thinks I'm the Cricklewood Ripper, the prosecution would have a field day. So I said:

"Look, it's all been a bit of a mistake. I'm sorry I bothered you. Good luck with the bus," and turned towards my car.

At which the man said: "Hang on a minute," and this time I thought: he is going to attempt to restrain me. I really will have to stick one on him, and I can't just drive off while he's rolling about, the bloody woman has my address. I shall arrive home to find the front garden full of the Old Bill; but fortunately for all of us, what he then said was: "I'm going that way, too, she'd be all right if I was in the car with her, wouldn't you, dear?"

Oh, yes, she'd be all right if he was in the car, no problem at all. So that's beside me, he in the back. "You can drop me at the corner of Dollis Hill Avenue," she said. The man said: "I'm going to Colindale, if that's not out of your way."

At the corner of Dollis Hill Avenue, I got out and went round to open the old lady's door.

"Do you know that man?" she said, sotto voce, as I shut it again.

"No," I said.

"Well," she said, "I hope you're all right with him sitting behind you like that. I mean, he could be anybody."



**In the heart of the West End, Ruth Gledhill joins in the high spirits of a congregation drawn from everywhere**

**Voices raised:** All Souls is widely renowned for its fine music.

all announcement.

In comparison, waiting for Christmas is waiting for a British Rail train, he was fervent and fiery, gesticulating often, but ending on a suitably sombre note. "What is happening to England, let alone the rest of the world? The most famous excuse for late trains is the wrong type of snow. But what we are looking at here as we wait for Christmas is the wrong type of world."

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 ★ stars are awarded on a maximum of five

**\* stars are awarded up to a maximum of five**

Annie Rankin and seven friends try their hands at a game of farcical detection

raised suspicion when her husband was electrocuted by the sewing machine. Nearby (left of the tea) is the Englishman Khovratyagin who, courteous to a fault, shows Belinda to her cabin. His suit and Oxford accent seem deviously perfect — too thin a veneer to disguise this member of the British secret service.

From the far end of the platform (rather, behind the sofa) comes Europe's most eligible bachelor, Dr. Schwäbze B. U. Klare. This swashbuckling swordsmann, with his Alsatian lilt and evening dress dripping with military decorations,

**Ham acting at home: a scene from "The Last Train From Paris"**

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WHAT TO WEAR



# Ruffling male feathers

Men have always dressed to kill at weekends in dull camouflage colours.

Robin Young says it's time to add brilliance to the winter plumage

For winter weekends the British male has always dressed to kill. That is why he creeps around the countryside, hedgerows and riverbanks in a bog-standard dingy camouflage that looks as if it has been chosen to match the overcast skies, the dank undergrowth and the mud.

Weekends were the time for sports jackets, and the sports were blood sports, so the trick required of the jackets was not to stand out, but to meld. Hence tweeds, and colours that have traditionally been chosen with a view to avoiding forewarning the foxes, alerting the game and, above all, frightening the horses. The precept for men's attire came to resemble the first rule for women's clothing which, as everyone should know, since P.J. O'Rourke has been kind enough to tell us, is: "Never wear anything that panics the cat."

No wonder, then, that those who have set the fashion for country and leisurewear have insisted on clothes in deadly "natural" colours — tweedy browns, rainy greys and rusty russets. Splashes of colour have been confined to tokenism: a pair of red braces here, a tie that blends there. The Duke of Devonshire could even achieve

national notoriety simply because he insisted on wearing canary-yellow socks.

For the most part Britons have been content to dress in dreary, dull conformity as though they lived in permanent dread of the exquisite rebuke fashioned by Daisy Ashford in *The Young Visitors*: "You look rather rash my dear your colors don't quite match your face."

Now, though, that leisure pursuits are more often trivial than fatal, surely we menfolk can afford to brighten ourselves up a bit? A nation that has come to think of the robin and the blue tit as colourful birds needs to be reminded that the wider world also has macaws, rollers and birds of paradise. We could take a cue, perhaps, from the gaudy kingfisher, our one truly brilliant native bird, which compensates with extra speed and professionalism for what he risks by wearing such flashy, dandified colours.

Oscar Wilde said that the only way to atone for being occasionally overdressed is by being always absolutely over-educated. In these well-schooled times of higher education and the national curriculum, and particularly now that we have developed a kinder society less hell-bent on destroying other species, bright colours for menswear should soon become the reliable signature and trademark of intellectual and social superiority.

This is a hope with which Julian Samengo-Taylor (photographed above), an insurance broker with Johnson and Higgins at Lloyd's, sympathises. "Life is so gloomy anyway, and there is quite enough misery about, without everyone dressing in uniformly dull clothes. We can at least try to look cheerful. Men on the Continent do not shy away from a bit of flamboyance, and neither should we. My new year resolutions are not to give anything up, and to wear brighter clothes. And if anyone wants to know what I would like for Christmas, I would feel really comfortable in this Ralph Lauren corduroy shirt."

John Parkinson, a photographers' agent, agrees. "I like clothes that are really bright and cheerful. In my work I have got to have a very lively wardrobe of clothes that are smart but casual. There was a time when everything seemed to be in dull, mustard colours, but fashion has moved on from that to more vivid, stronger colours that will stand out. I move in an image-making profession, and am perhaps a bit more affected by what is



going on around me, but I think that even for those in duller professions, bright colours which can make a bold style statement at the weekend or in the evening must be the coming thing.

"I really like wearing green suede trousers and bright Gucci shoes, and that is a statement I feel perfectly comfortable with."

Manufacturers, too, are just beginning to believe that there may be a burgeoning market at last for brighter colours in men's leisurewear. Richard O'Rourke, managing director of Timberland, says: "Traditionally our coats have been in natural colours like tans, greens, rusts and browns, but from now we are going to be trying some very brightly coloured wharf coats, cut like the jackets longshoremen in Boston and New York wore, but in completely different colours — bright red, strong royal blue and lime green."

"We hope that in future we will catch the general trend for clothing to be a bit brighter when early spring comes round and the sap gets moving again. We are looking to introduce a bit more vibrancy."

To help achieve that goal, Mr O'Rourke has recruited a new designer, Michael Jackson, coming from Banana Republic and The Gap, who can be expected to put much

stronger emphasis on brighter colours than Timberland ever dared in the past.

Victoria Clive, marketing facilitator for Johnnie Boden, the stockbroker turned mail-order clothes merchant, feels there may be advantages for mail order companies in selling bright menswear. "Rupert Bear trousers have proved to be one of our runaway best-sellers, though when we introduced them they seemed to be the most outrageous thing we had in the catalogue. Johnnie's reaction was 'must have that' as soon as he saw the swatch, though the girls in the office, including me, were much more dubious."

"The trousers' success has really proved a point. It might be easier for us to sell bright clothes through a catalogue than it would be in a store, because men don't have to go through the business of choosing them and trying them on in public. If they do not like them, whether it's because they are too bright or not bright enough, they can simply send them back. There is nothing to be embarrassed about."

James Mullen, director of shirtmakers Thomas Pink, says: "We are introducing stronger colours. Shirtmakers traditionally used colours in bold, bright stripes. Now we are trying more interesting colours in plain, self-coloured shirts, and using strong colours in fine checks. Men are generally becoming more confident about wearing something that is unusual and striking, so even the jeans manufacturers are turning out denims in bright colours."



Best friends: musher Chris Anderson from Peterhead competing in the Kielder Forest

LEFT

Julian (left) wears purple Soviet jeans, £55, available at Way In, Harrods, Knightsbridge, London SW1. Dark blue polo neck, £25, and blue gingham shirt, £42, both Thomas Pink, 35 Dover St. W1, and London branches. Red jacket, £135, Timberland, 72 New Bond Street, W1. John wears green suede trousers, £295, Paul Smith, 41-44 Floral Street, London WC2. Red rugby shirt, £45, Hackett, 137-138 Staines Street, London SW13 and selected branches. Green sweater, £40, Racing Green (for catalogue phone 0789 200244). Blue suede shoes, £195, Gucci, 32-33 Old Bond Street, London W1.

RIGHT

Julian (left) wears yellow check trousers, £65, and yellow check hat, £26, both at Johnnie Boden (for free catalogue, call 071-608 3230). Red polo shirt, £25, Thomas Pink (as above). Green sweater, Racing Green (as above). Red dockers, £69.99, Russell & Bromley, available from March in selected branches (071-629 6903). James (centre) wears red rugby shirt, £45, Hackett (as above). Yellow jumper, £40, Racing Green (as above). Red Soviet jeans, £55, available from Way In (as above). Green jacket, £135, Timberland (as above). John (right) wears red gingham shirt, £42, Thomas Pink (as above). Aubergine cardigan, £185, Marion Foale, 15 Hinda Street, London W1. Red jacket, £135, Timberland (as above). Green jeans, £34.99, Next branches (enquiries, 0533 490321). Yellow suede shoes, £195, Gucci (as above).

LEFT

John (left) wears red Aran jumper, £39.99, Next branches (as above). Yellow suede waistcoat with Jacobite or ancient Campbell tartan lining, £45, Johnnie Boden (as above). Blue jeans, £37.99, Pepe (for stockists, 081-459 1277). Red suede shoes, £195, Gucci (as above). Julian wears pale blue Pepe jeans, £37.99. Red cord shirt, £85, from Ralph Lauren, 143 New Bond Street, London W1. Green jumper, £40, Racing Green (as above). Red dockers, £69.99, Russell & Bromley (as above).

Photography John Hudson Styling Victoria Pymon

Photographed on board Maiste by kind permission of Sir Donald Gosling



## The winner by

This winter the authentic voice, if not the meteorologically correct decor, of Alaska comes to Britain. From The Trossachs to the Forest of Dean, from Norfolk to Northumberland, the Forestry Commission's normally dreary conifers will echo to such ancient and evocative calls of the Frozen North, and of an entire library of Hollywood eskimo movies, as "gee", "haw" and "hike" (but not "mush").

Only 14 years after the first competitive race was held in Britain, one of our youngest amateur sports graduates to its first national competition. A six-race series for the National Husky Racing Championships starts today in Thedford, Norfolk, and will swing through the forests to the decider at Kielder, Northumberland, in late February.

Cynics may raise an incredulous eyebrow, but in husky racing "amateur" means precisely that. Fit, keen dogs rattle and slurp their three-wheeled rigs — or if it snows, pad along with real swooshing sleds — around a steep, winding forest track at an average 17mph, and come home in times only a stopwatch can prise apart. (Two years ago, in the Kielder rally, just four seconds separated the first and second teams after two days and 28 miles of racing).

But there are no champagne showers at the award ceremony — inappropriate, anyway, as the event is sponsored by the Canadian lager company, Labatt. It is cups and medals only for the winners, and for

the dogs a few biscuits and a lot of praise. "Wethought long and hard about prizes, but decided the welfare of the dogs comes first," says Ross Goldie, committee member of the championship organisers, the British Sled Dog Racing Association (BSDR). "If there was cash at stake, people might be tempted to put their dogs to hard. So far wharven't need to conduct a single drugs test."

Like the shepherd, the Siberian husky I bred for a purpose: the long haul over frozen wastes. So do not even consider it as a family pet with which to retrace *Nanook of the North* in the local park. "You can't take them for walks: huskies have no road sense," says Mr Goldie, an engineer in the oil industry. Mr Goldie and his wife have seven huskies, which they had devotedly behind a 7ft high fence, underpinned by concrete blocks, in their garden in a village near Glasgow. "They can't get over they will try to dig under. They are great escape artists, and inveterate wanderers," he says.

Potential the owner of a single dog can compete if he or she can find a partner to take part in one of the many winter gymkhanas.

There are classes for two,





## CHRISTMAS BREAKS

## A nibble at the Big Apple

John Wellman spends a high-speed weekend discovering Manhattan

Visitors to New York can become obsessed with the city's cabs and cab drivers unless they are very careful. Although the familiar bulbous version of the yellow cab is now history, that most obvious form of transport in the city tends to be one of the most vivid memories after a long weekend there.

My wife, and I and two friends chose New York for a short but frantic holiday weekend to celebrate her birthday. For the novice visitor to New York, the cab from the airport is the first chance to sample the atmosphere of the city. Thereafter, the cab driver is your almost constant companion, so cheap and available is he. Our first driver, Mussett Butler, uttered two words during the 30-minute drive to Manhattan, earning a \$32 fare plus a \$4 tip for a "yup" and "oke". He was, we were assured later, positively talkative.

If we were expecting to enjoy a view of the famous skyline in the late afternoon on the drive from the airport, we were certainly disappointed. The foul weather that had delayed our flight for almost two hours put paid to that, and raised the prospect of a weekend spent in a misty drizzle.

Of many similar offers, we chose the American Airlines package of three nights, leaving London at lunchtime on Thursday, returning from Kennedy airport on Sunday night, largely for the location of the hotel. The Dorset is at 30 West 54th Street, near Fifth Avenue and close to Central Park, the Rockefeller Centre and the Museum of Modern Art. A comfortable, venerable hotel with agonisingly slow lifts, it was more than adequate for tourists who intended to eyeball until they dropped.

On the first night, we went for a meal at Planet Hollywood. This was only a five-minute walk away and, for an eatery crammed with movie memorabilia and inspired by film stars, surprisingly uncrowded. The novelty of consuming a burger and hand-cut fries under the gaze of a Spielberg gremlin on one side and a Star Wars robot on the other wore off remarkably quickly. Two starters, four burgers and eight beers cost \$80.

Day two and some serious visiting of famous places. We



Winter wonderland: skaters in New York's Central Park

took a splendid walk down Fifth Avenue on a glorious morning to the Empire State building.

Four breakfasts for \$16 in The Big Apple restaurant on the ground floor of the Empire State made us think that a similarly placed restaurant in London would require a flexible friend for payment.

Queuing for the Empire State building was quick and well organised. Entry was \$3.50 each, followed by a smooth trip in a lift to the eighty-sixth floor, where we enjoyed a magnificent, chilly view over Manhattan from 1,050ft. Then up in the lift to the glassed-in observation room at 1,250ft. Everyone seems to have a story about the Empire State building. It even survived a collision with an off-

course US bomber during the second world war. One of the most remarkable suicide stories concerns a woman who flung herself from the eightieth floor, only to be blown back in through a fifty-sixth-floor window by a freak gust of wind.

The pace heated up now. Cabs were abandoned just for the morning and we took the subway to South Ferry for a trip on the Staten Island Ferry. The bullet-proof glass of the ticket booth was a reminder not to relax completely.

The ferry terminus was drab, smelly and reminiscent of a Midlands bus depot, but the trip across the Hudson river and back was spectacular. It was also the best value of the weekend, as it proved impossible to find out where to pay the 50 cents for the round trip.

Around the corner from the ferry terminal is Pier 17, a

newish development with shops and a fine Irish bar with a gorgeous view of the Brooklyn Bridge. Also nearby is Fulton Street, with its old shops and chaotic fish restaurant, where lobster, shrimp and swordfish are served up in fast-food style.

Back to the hotel via the Museum of Modern Art, where the queue for the Matisse exhibition stretched into the distance and we decided reluctantly not to join it.

A walk around a buzzing Greenwich village in the evening led eventually to the Peculiar Bar, with English-style pumped bitter and raw, beautifully sung blues from a Jimi Hendrix lookalike, who blossomed swiftly from bar drunk to artiste when the microphone became free.

Supper was in the Arlecchino restaurant in nearby Bloeker Street at the recommendation of a fat mounted policeman enjoying a horseback cappuccino delivered by one of the waiters.

Time was starting to run out now. Saturday was for shopping. Macy's was packed and hectic with festive bunting, a Santa Claus on every corner and its front door Christmas trees firmly chained to their earth-filled pots. Only for the dedicated bargain hunter.

The evening brought yet another cab ride, this time to the twin towers of the World Trade Centre, where for just \$4 head you can sit in the bar by the picture windows on the 107th floor and watch night-time New York go about its business as you sip your drink.

Sunday, the last day. The planned walk in Central Park had to be replaced by a pricey horse-and-race ride — \$34 for just 20 minutes — after I tore a leg muscle on the steps of the Rockefeller Plaza.

As I was wheelchair-bound at the airport at Kennedy airport, I was struck by the amazing energy of the city, and how three and a half days in Manhattan is hardly long enough to scratch the surface. It calls for another foray.

● The author took an American Airlines winter weekend break. Scheduled service from Heathrow or Manchester to John F. Kennedy airport, £369 per person, including return flights, three nights in hotel (no breakfast) and all taxes.

The Times/Hoverspeed money-saving cross-Channel offer

## France and back at half price

- ☐ Up to five passengers
- ☐ No limit on size of car
- ☐ Plus savings on other trips next summer

Thinking about taking a short-break motor holiday in France next year? Well, here's how you can start planning your journey with a big saving on the cross-Channel cost.

The Times, in association with Hoverspeed, is offering readers a special 5-day Motorway Return for car (irrespective of size) and up to five passengers at half price on both the Dover-Calais and the Folkestone-Boulogne routes.

The 5-day Motorway Return should give you plenty of scope for exploring the best of northern France — Le Touquet and its beaches, the countryside around St Omer, Arras and Amiens and, of course, Paris. Or, from Calais, you could drive into Belgium and Holland. The choice and the saving are yours.

● The cost: Dover-Calais return by hovercraft, only £47.50 (normal price £95). Folkestone-Boulogne return by SeaCat, only £61 (normally £122).

## TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- 1 To qualify for this offer, all bookings should be made using the form printed in The Times and by postal application only.
- 2 Under the terms of The Times/Hoverspeed offer, you are entitled to a 50 per cent discount on a five-day motorway return for a car and up to five passengers from Folkestone to Boulogne or Dover to Calais from January 4 to March 25 1993, but excluding the period February 12-21.
- 3 All bookings are subject to the carrier's booking conditions — copies available on request — and are subject to availability.
- 4 The half-price offer applies to five-day motorway returns only, and excludes Same Day, 3-Day or Standard returns.
- 5 As the fares offered are heavily discounted, we regret we cannot accept credit card bookings.
- 6 This offer also entitles readers to a 10 per cent discount on a standard return booking during the summer period with Hoverspeed on either route.
- 7 If we are unable to confirm your booking, or your crossing has been cancelled due to adverse weather, all monies will be returned.
- 8 Insurance: On any overseas trip, you are advised to take out adequate personal and medical insurance. Please ask for details of EuroSave's Safeguard insurance.



- The dates for travel on both routes: from January 4 to March 25 next (excluding the period February 12-21).
- The bonus: readers who take up either of these money-saving offers will also qualify for a 10 per cent discount on a standard return booking taking during the summer months — again, irrespective of car size or number of passengers.
- To take advantage of this Times/Hoverspeed offer, first plan where and when you want to go, then complete the booking form and send it with your remittance to: The Times/Hoverspeed Travel Offer, EuroSave Travel Club Ltd, Maybrook House, Dover, Kent CT17 9UQ.

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## SPORTING LIFE

## Tinner by a cold nose

Gareth Huw Davies on the first national husky racing championship

ar and six dogs. A fit husky pull up to two and a half times its own weight (the average dog weighs 55lb). A team of two dogs can easily pull a 13½-stone Mr Goldie on a flat, but requires more "pusher" input (although "push" is hardly used these

days, the driver is known as the musher, also corrupted from the French "marcher"). That means you come to the bottom of a hill, jump off and leg it. Six dogs can pull a quarter of a tonne, so even uphill you stay on and just give the odd "scout". If it snows the mushers

## Husky fact box

- Numbers: There are about 3,000 huskies in Britain. Between 750 and 1,000 are regularly worked and raced with sleds or rigs. The Kennel Club, 1 Clarges Street, London W1Y 8AB (071-629 5828) provides an information pack.
- Equipment: Relatively inexpensive, compared to motorised sports. A wheeled rig can cost between £300 and £500. Add on the cost of harnesses and two lines. A husky puppy costs about £250; puppies from the best racing lines from £400. Feed costs are less than £5 a week for a good racing dog.
- The season: Events and gymkhanas are held between mid-October and mid-March. Details from the Siberian Husky Club of Great Britain (whose secretary is Penny Evans) at The Old Post Office, 3 High Street, Lampore, Northants NN6 9HB (0601 28281). The club can provide names of breeders.
- Venues: Everybody is welcome at this winter's BSDRA championships, where top husky racers are eager to popularise their sport. Venues are Brandon, Suffolk (Dec 19/20), Wye Valley, Gwent (Jan 2/3), Aberfoyle, Scotland (Jan 8/9), Thetford, Norfolk (Feb 6/7), Culbin, Scotland (Feb 20/21) and Kielder, Northumberland (Feb 27/28). Contact: Ross Goldie (0360 310762) or Simon Luxmore (0600 860185).

scurry like so many fulfilled Citizen Kanes for their sleds, still made in white ash and hickory, although now with synthetic composite runners — the only real break in a 4,000-year-old tradition. But most winters the Gulf Stream prevails and they race three-wheeled rigs, which at least offer some elementary steering and breaking to curb the dogs' runaway downhill enthusiasm.

All drivers use the same commands, directed by name to a specific dog. "Gee" means turn right; "haw" is turn left; "hike" signifies move forward. The lead dog tends to be the fastest and the brightest, with the nous to keep his line tight, so maintaining maximum pull, and to cope with five big strong dogs behind him. If he makes a mistake, they all follow him.

For the top 100 or so championship contenders, training begins in the summer, often at alarmingly early hours — a husky is after all a fur coat on legs, best exerted in the cool. By winter, training can build up to four days a week. By race day the dogs positively fly with the 35lb of the rig, or the 20lb of the sled, and a musher behind them. Downhill they can reach speeds of 25mph.

The dogs receive the dietary cosseting of top athletes, but no racer will tell you what goes into the bowl. Among the ingredients in a feed with a 35 per cent protein and 25 per cent fat content that the Goldies prepare are minced raw steak, tripe and chicken — "easily digestible — all good power stuff".

The BSDRA events take place over two days. Courses are usually raced twice. The longest is the 14-mile Kielder course, usually the best bet for snow — sled times are considerably faster than rigs. Snow-free courses are between six and eight miles.

The races are time trials, so no mass start with pandemonium on the first corner. The fastest teams depart first at two or three-minute intervals. Even then there is a lot of overtaking — the top ten teams are roughly twice as fast as the bottom ten. A good musher knows how to pace his dogs.

Ross Goldie relives the disappointment of the championship-sinking unscheduled stop. "A line goes slack, a dog gets its back leg over it, and you have to go back to sort it out. That's it, all gone. You never catch up. Just like motor racing."

"But," says Simon Luxmore, a former Bath rugby player who has been racing huskies for more than ten years, "it doesn't matter how aggressive or ambitious you are. In the end it's all down to the dogs, their breeding, nutrition, training and their attitude. And as soon as the race is finished, whether you won, lost or drew, that's history."



Nicole Swengley explores the high street for some useful tips for last-minute Christmas shoppers

## Santa's final sackful

Leaving Christmas shopping to the last moment need not invoke a panic attack. Our recent trip yielded plenty of tasteful and imaginative gifts at reasonable prices from high-street stores. Alternatively, invest in a fistful of gift vouchers. Apart from obvious sources like Boots, Our Price and Marks & Spencer, they can be bought at Toys 'R' Us, Oddbins, Threshers, Tesco, Sainsbury's, B&Q, Woolworth, Thomas Cook and Beefeater restaurants and pubs, usually in denominations from £1.

Where else to buy traditional apothecary bottles than at Boots the Chemist? Chunky dark blue bottles contain shampoo, £1.99, muscle rub, £2.99, or aftershave balm, £2.75. From a selection for men at larger Boots stores.

Pear-shaped secret box, £4.99 from a selection of fruit boxes at W.H. Smith stores nationwide, could be filled with W.H. Smith gift vouchers costing £1, £2, £5, £10 or £20.



Shape, Rattle and Roll sorter, £3.99, from the Brighter Kids range of pre-school toys designed by Sebastian Conran, is suitable for children over three months and available from larger Tesco stores

Animal magic: painted wooden pig mug-rack, £12.99 from larger Marks & Spencer stores.

This red and black Mickey Mouse children's party waistcoat, suitable for children from 18 months to two years old, is available for £8.99 from British Homes Stores nationwide.



Snoopy hair dryer by Clairol, £19.99 from House of Fraser stores nationwide, blow-dries through the nose for pedigree styling.

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## Thankless tasks ahead

How do you make children write thank you letters? Sufferers and their parents offer some advice

I enjoy drawing pictures of the presents I've been sent, round the margins. When I'm grown up, I'll certainly make my children do the same."

Such piety would horrify the Bevan family from London, whose two children, Nicola (14) and David (8), rarely write thank you missives — with the blessing of their mother, Anne Bevan, a lecturer in material sciences.

come from someone else with the same surname. I don't really enjoy writing letters, and I don't think the older generation expects it nowadays."

The Staton-Bevans from Hampshire, relatives of the Bevans above, harbour no resentment at this *laissez-faire* policy, although they expect better from their own offspring. "I want the children to be grateful for what they've

thing to write. "I'll aim for a page if they're lucky. And yes, there are times when I don't feel like writing if I haven't even enjoyed the present. But I still do it out of courtesy."

Courtesy, insists David Williamson from Deben's, dictates that all well-bred children pick up their pens after Boxing day even if mother does have to dictate the wording over their shoulders. "I've had some quaint giveaway adult phrases from my five godchildren, such as 'I shall think of you when I use it.' Such endearing notes end up on the recipient's kitchen noticeboard until the following Christmas.

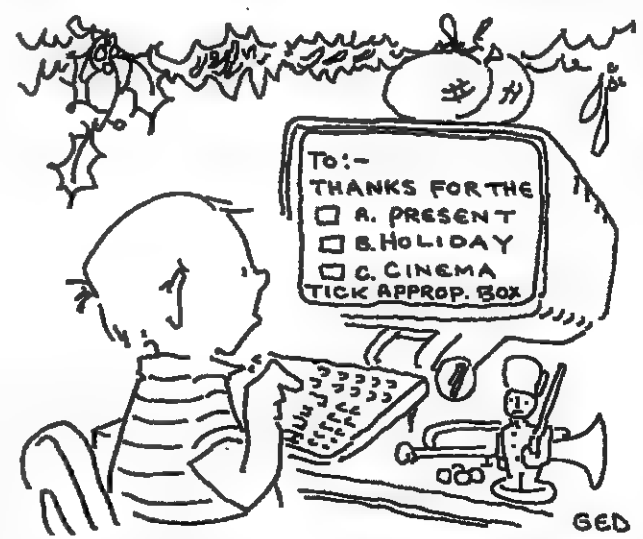
Age is no barrier. Karen Hunt, mother of Charlotte, two, and Francine, nearly one, writes from her Buckinghamshire cottage on behalf of her daughters as though she is them (for example, "I love playing with the doll"). "Then I help Charlotte write her initial 'C' afterwards. It's also good handwriting practice."

Softer options for the younger age group include the dreaded (and often expensive) printed "Thank you" notelets which one of my godchildren inevitably sends me every Christmas. My own offspring would love to do the same, but courtesy and penny-pinching forbid them — much more imaginative for a small child to stencil his own "Thank you" motif and embellish it with glitter and paint.

Top marks too to Joanna Edges, 9, of Guildford, who perseveres with her letters despite having dyslexia. "She'll sit at the dining room table and ask me how to spell certain words," says her mother, Anita Edges. "Sometimes I'll leave her mistakes in — my mother prefers this because then she knows Joanna has written it herself. I don't mind phone calls from other children but I do like some acknowledgement for that huge number of presents I fork out for every year."

Joanna herself admits to getting "bored sometimes — especially if I don't know what to write. It helps if the present was really good. Last year, Granny gave me a super camera. I wrote that I'd use it for my holiday. It's important to write letters because the people who get them are pleased. But the best part is going to the post box because then I've got rid of them."

JANE BIDDER



"A laborious letter takes the pleasure out of the present," Mrs Bevan says. "Instead, they might ring up someone who sent them a present in the post — or else they'll just say 'thank you' at the time they're given something."

"Although I receive letters from my nephew and niece, I always tell a child I don't expect a thank you letter back because I don't want to pressurise them. The only exception is that I do make my daughter write to her French penfriend's mother after she's been there to stay. But it takes ages to get Nicola to write. Only today, after clearing out her room, I found the letter she wrote back in April but forgot to post. So we're sending it off now along with a Christmas card."

Nicola herself seems frighteningly assured of her non-traditional stance. "A phone call is perfectly adequate, although I did once make a mistake and thanked a relative verbally for a present she'd sent whereas it was still in the post. The gift had actually

received and not take it for granted," says Lynda Staton-Bevans, mother of Fiona, 14 and Simon, 13. "I make them write a list of who gave what when they receive something, so they can actually name the object in their letter. Then they might say what they're going to do with it and what they've been doing over the holidays."

Punctuality is one key to such success: the "get-it-all-over-in-one-day" school of thought is another. "We usually do them the day after Boxing day," Simon says. "I save it for when there isn't anything interesting on television. Yes, it is a chore and I have to think hard about what to write. I might do a rough copy and then write out variations in neat. I try to be tidy — I'm not an ink eradicator. I'm definitely pleased to get them finished but I'll still make my own children write letters. It gives them a good reputation!"

His sister Fiona seeks inspiration from Radio 1 while sitting in her bedroom and doodling in search of some-

Caroline Morse

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# Town guide to best cellars



Lying in wait: Frances Bissell, the *Times* cook, and her husband, Tom, a wine writer, have had a wine "cellar" built into the spare room of their Hampstead apartment

The cubbyholes and small anterooms of Georgian and Victorian houses often provide a valuable resource missing from many modern houses and converted flats — vital storage space. Not that the lack of purpose-built cupboards and cellars stops people accumulating things; they just need greater resourcefulness.

A flamboyant wine writer I once visited in his top-floor north London flat had reduced his staircase to a single narrow pathway with cases stacked on either side. Visitors had to pick their way between the *premiers crus* and supermarket best buys. I never did find out what happened to him when he came home after a tasting too many.

Improvising a wine cellar is a challenge for people living without storage, and others' solutions can often provide inspiration. Ralph Brown, who imports wine from Italy, has found an open-plan answer. He lives with his wife, two children and about 2,000 bottles on the fourth floor of a mansion block in South Kensington. "The building was built in 1880, and there are coal holes, but they tend to be damp, which is no good for the labels or the corks," Mr Brown says. "The security isn't reliable either. Hiring storage space is expensive, so eventually I decided to use the corridor."

## Kay Marles discovers several imaginative ways of laying down a wine collection if your house or flat has no cellar

Mr Brown keeps the wine against a structural wall, where he has installed a series of 6ft-high professional wine racks. "The important thing is that wine should stay at a fairly steady temperature," he says. "As there is no central heating in the flat, it is easy to keep the corridor from fluctuating wildly between hot and cold. The lack of light is also an advantage."

Weight is not a problem because the bottles are distributed evenly along the length of the wall; the racks are wedged at the front and tilted back. His children, aged four and two, leave well alone. "They know not to touch the bottles on threat of death," Mr Brown says, "and we have had no mishaps yet."

Frances Bissell, the *Times* cook, has had a wine cellar built into the spare room of her north London flat, which occupies the upper two floors of a Victorian terrace house. Her husband, Tom, a wine writer, has been buying at auction and from merchants for the past 20 years, but their preferred lifestyle offers no easy option for storing the stuff. "We like to live with a lot of light, which is no good for wine. A friend, Pete Smart, a lute and furniture maker, offered to build a store for us," she says.

Mr Smart built a double wall across one third of the spare room, away from all radiators and windows. He filled the 3in cavity with insulating material, to keep the temperature as constant as possible, and built eight new bins. With shelves above the door and along the new wall, the "cellar" can house up to 1,200 bottles.

"He calculated that 1,200 bottles weigh one ton," Mr Bissell says, "and decided that would be the limit for a second-floor flat."

Here again, the weight problem has been solved by distributing the bottles evenly around the space and using the party wall with the house next door as the main load-bearing wall. "It's an excellent solution," Mrs Bissell says. "The rest of the room is a study furnished with desks and a couch. We don't believe we've devalued the flat: our cellar could be an excellent dark-room or storage space, or could even be dismantled if need be."

Hilary Adams, a professional musician, lives in a flat-fronted Georgian house in east London and has been collecting wine for three or four years, since being

given membership of the Wine Society as a wedding present. She has converted two former coal cellars, reached through a manhole in the pavement, into storage space for wine and tools. "They didn't appear attractive features at all when we were buying the house," she says. "But now they are a fantastic bit of extra space."

"Although the wine cellar is under the pavement in front of the house, we can get into it from the basement. The previous owners cleaned and dried it out, and we have put in wine racks. We can't use metal racks because it is slightly damp down there, so we use pine, which we have had treated. We could have it tanked — similar to having a damp-proof course put in — but that is expensive, and so far we haven't felt the need."

The temperature never rises, even in the summer. We had problems with labels getting damp and becoming illegible, so we bought plastic labels to hang on the bottles."

What Ms Adams particularly likes about her makeshift cellar is that it has enhanced the collecting of wine. "It's fun," she says, "just to nip down to the cellar for a bottle because it's there. It is nice to be

able to stack them away and not worry about them. And it will definitely be a factor when we move house. I'm sure we couldn't manage without a cellar now."

Rosemary George, Master of Wine and a writer, also used a coal bunker in her early imbibing days in Pimlico, south London. Hers had doubled as a wartime air-raid shelter.

When she moved, she and her husband bought a turn-of-the-century house in west London. Every house in the road had a cellar. "If you've been used to it, it is almost impossible to do without a wine cellar," she says. She took the racks from her coal bunker, and her husband had some bins built out of brick and Welsh slate.

"Abrupt changes in temperature are serious but rare," she says. She has about 5,000 bottles, which she sorts on wet Sunday afternoons. "We put yellow stickers on bottles we should drink sooner rather than later," she says. "Otherwise I tend to have an idea lurking in my mind of what's there. Sometimes one comes across nice surprises."

Storage in country houses is rarely such a problem; but even in cities, in top-floor flats and basements, and in old houses especially, there are ways of storing wine that will preserve the pleasure and quality without the need to resort to the expensive luxury of storing at your local wine merchant.

## High hopes of a lowly cattle shed

Redundant French farm buildings can be converted into attractive homes. Many such properties have masses of character and good potential, with larger than average rooms and lots of original features. Often, they have no near neighbours, apart from the farmhouse itself, and enjoy a secluded rural setting.

The disadvantages include the close proximity of a working farmyard, which hardly makes for a peaceful atmosphere. Also, the extent of the renovation work can be considerable, and you could end up spending more than you bargained for.

Planning permission — *permis de construire* — is needed for the conversion of independent farm buildings (a barn that adjoins a house and shares the same roof is considered part of the house). Septic tanks also need permission. The planning application must be to the local town hall, which will supply the appropriate forms. If the conversion complies with all the rules, including local design regulations, approval will be granted within two months.

Do not be tempted to ignore the rules — even if some locals do. You run the risk of having to demolish all you have built. Also, do not overspend on the conversion. Restoration costs are high and might not be recouped on resale. It might be wiser to buy a farm building that has already been modernised, at least in part. The initial cost would be higher, but there would be less to spend later on. In the present depressed market there are bargains to be had.

Situated in a tiny rural hamlet, near the village of Jumilhac-le-Grand in northeast Dordogne, this converted stable and barn, com-



Buyer's France

### DORDOGNE

plete with a swimming pool and enough land to graze a few horses, is for sale at FF650,000 (about £80,000). The nearest airport is Limoges, 40 minutes' drive away.

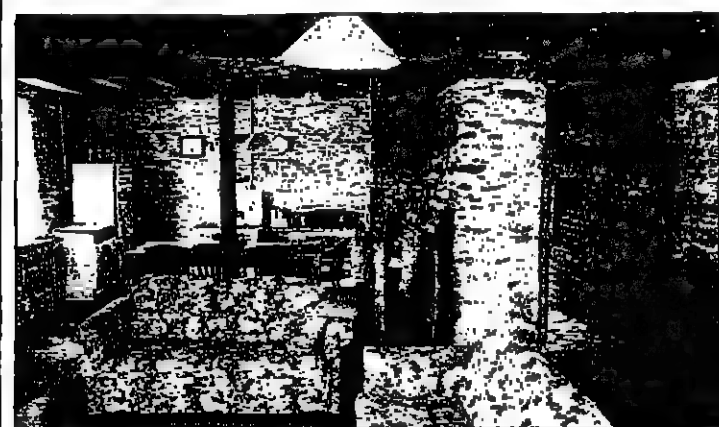
The old *perigordine* stone-built animal shelter has been converted into a home, with exposed stone walls, oak-beamed ceilings and open fireplaces. It has a large open-plan living room, with a fitted corner kitchen area, four bedrooms and two bathrooms, plus an attached barn for renovation. It has lovely views and comes with one and a half acres of lawn, meadow and fruit trees.

For less than half that price — FF250,000 — you can buy an old stone stable, partially converted, with half an acre of garden bordered by a stream, in the Charente Maritime, not far from the old market town of Pons and a river with good fishing.

Roof, floors and plumbing are new, but further restoration is needed, including proper sanitation. The living room has beamed ceilings and a huge open fireplace, and a large room above is suitable for conversion to bedrooms and bathroom.

CHERYL TAYLOR

UK agent: The French Property Shop, Wadhurst Road, Mark Cross, East Sussex (0892 852449).



Acres of space: these converted stables are for sale at £80,000

### COURSES

A PRACTICAL course for would-be French property owners has been organised by the British agent Latitudes (14 Pipers Green Lane, Edgware, HA8 8DG; 081-958 5485) in association with French agent Vialat International, based in Lot et Garonne.

The four-day residential course — to be held at the Château de L'Hôte in St Beauzeil, an hour

from Toulouse — covers such topics as conveyancing, legal and financial matters. There are also visits to properties for sale, renovation projects and the town hall, plus on-site sessions with local builders and architects.

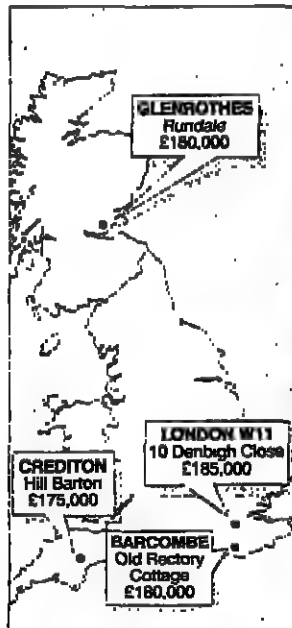
The next course, on January 15-18, costs FF2,500 (about £300), or FF4,900 for a couple, for full board, course material and a lift from Toulouse airport. A special offer for *Times* readers gives FF250 off the normal price.

### Caroline Morse

views a grand Scottish residence, Devon farmhouse, Sussex home and London mews cottage

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Scotland: Rundle, Windygates, nr Glenrothes. Detached stone-built residence in 5½ acres with stabling. Five bedrooms, bathroom, three reception rooms, kitchen/dining room, utility room. About £150,000 (CA Property, 0592 759653).



London: 10 Denbigh Close, W11. Cottage at end of cobbled mews. Three bedrooms, two bathrooms (one en suite), two reception rooms and kitchen. Roof in need of repair. Parking facilities. About £185,000 (Knight Frank & Rutley, 071-938 4311).



Sussex: Old Rectory Cottage, Barcombe, nr Lewes. Detached residence in half an acre. Three bedrooms, bathroom, cloakroom/shower room, two reception rooms, sun-room and utility room. About £180,000 (Strutt & Parker, 0273 475411).



Devon: Hill Barton, nr Crediton. Detached Victorian farmhouse in 2 acres with self-contained, two-bedroom annexe. Four bedrooms, bathroom, two reception rooms and kitchen. Outbuildings include summerhouse and stabling. About £175,000 (Stags, 0884 256331).

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# Musical Peter Pans capture the magic of childhood



Cherkassky: still expanding his repertoire at the age of 80

Two Peter Pan musicians have surfaced on CD for Christmas: the 25-year-old Olli Mustonen and the 80-year-old Shura Cherkassky, each one a real *peer eternus* of the piano. Mustonen looks east, as he did in his first recording of Shostakovich and Alban Berg's fantasy of Balakirev, Tchaikovsky and Mussorgsky (Decca 436 255-2). In his nimble fingers, Balakirev's *Islamey* becomes a jewelled fairytale of the orient, its echoes of Caucasian dance and instruments ringing out to the skittish close.

Mustonen never forgets that Tchaikovsky's *Children's Album* was really written for children to play. The sudden distraction, the momentary diversion, and the inspiration of the passing second are all there: in the sweet, gawky waltz, the shaft of sunlight that is the "Kamarsinskaya" dance, the sudden descent at the end of the "Song of the Lark". Like a child with a new set of

## Hilary Finch enjoys the work of two pianists who share the same youthful approach to music

crayons, he loves to experiment with the different resonating qualities of the piano, too. The sharp, brisk attack which etches out the frost patterns of "Winter morning" is matched by the echoing reverberations of the "Peasant playing an accordion".

The witchy Baba Yaga, hurtling through the sky, returns in more threatening guise in Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*, which Mustonen sees very much as a grown-up storybook. His imagination is as fleet as his fingers. Whimsy and the unpredictable collide in a picture of the Tuilleries as poignant as it is frothy, in a Limoges marketplace where hard, percussive playing recreates the clatter of clogs on cobbles as much as the

busy tongues of the peasant women. The Promenade itself is a progressive mirror of Mustonen's playing.

Shura Cherkassky, who celebrated his eightieth birthday in a live Carnegie Hall recital a year ago, (Decca 433 654-2) gives us an old, wise child's-eye view of Bach-Busoni, Schumann and Chopin. As the late Peter Wadland, who produced this record, reminds us, there is "very little Bach or Busoni, and a lot of Cherkassky" in this mighty Chaconne. Cherkassky frequently reverses the indicated dynamics and plays, auda-

ciously, in different tempos. His Symphonic Etudes, too, are totally idiosyncratic: the glinting right-hand figuration of one dancing study becomes a mincing marcato, only to tumble, heister-skeller, into an Agitato of true virtuosity.

Cherkassky had only just learnt the Ives *Three-page Sonata* which he played as a tribute to his American audience, revelling in the extraordinary layers of recession, as if playing two pianos, one of them offstage.

As the evening heats up, Cherkassky turns to the "Kaleidoscope" of his teacher Josef Hofmann, and then to his favourite Pabst paraphrase of themes from Eugene O'Neill. Here, he becomes each character in turn, at the same time as being a sometimes outrageously mischievous director.

He ends with Moron Gould's "Boogie-Woogie Etude": as he apparently said at the time, "Isn't it wonderful that at my age I can still do this?"

THEATRE: Benedict Nightingale reviews the stage adaptation of an Oscar-winning shocker

## Murderous muse with a talent to abuse

One of Evelyn Waugh's heroes spends his declining years reading Dickens, Dickens and yet more Dickens to a manic bibliophile in the inaccessible heart of the South American jungle. By the standards of Stephen King's male Scherzade, he had it easy. The punishment King hands out to Paul Sheldon, his novelist-protagonist, is to write chapter after chapter of rapturous tosh for a fan who, if he falters or raises his sights from low to middlebrow, is all too likely to amputate the foot she has not already chopped off.

What is King offering us here? The self-flagellating nightmare of a popular writer who feels he has not done himself artistic justice? Maybe. A self-pitying and, given King's commercial success, somewhat disingenuous complaint about the tyranny of philistine taste? Probably. A warning about the dangers of pandering to people's dreams in the celebrity-mad United States? Well, Stephen Sondheim's *Assassins* is just down the road, reminding us of what can happen when that peculiarly American mixture of worship, envy, frustration and rage takes hold of a social inadequate. Sheldon's nemesis can perhaps be seen as a John Wilkes Booth in drag, a

### Misery Criterion

Lee Harvey Oswald with a thing about romantic writers. Or is *Misery* just a rare example of that half-forgotten genre, grand guignol? That seems a bit more likely and, at least as far as this grumpy critic is concerned, a bit more appealing as Yuletide begins to encroach. Instead of taking the kids to see Father Christmas in his department-store grotto, why not sample Sharon Gless's female alternative, with her Santa cap, her troubling gifts, her vindictive kindnesses? The seasonal greetings she offers Sheldon mid-way through the play are surely what some of those fake-jolly men would secretly like to offer the little darlings.

But I digress, or at least jump forward. As anyone will know who has read King's original novel, or seen the film based on it, Sheldon has a bone-splintering car-crash and ends up rescued from a snowdrift by the reclusive nurse, Annie Wilkes. For a time — too short in Simon Moore's stage adaptation — she seems a true Florence Nightingale. But "your greatest fan", as she terms herself, is soon forcing Sheldon to wash down his painkillers with

urine and cleaning fluid, to burn the manuscript of his bold new book because of its "profane" language, and, above all, to resuscitate Miss Misery, the heroine he has killed off, and write new romances about her. One false move and — well, an axe and a shotgun are among the cereals in her medicine chest.

Kathy Bates won an Oscar for her playing of this part, and with reason, since she blended the baleful and the sentimental to wonderfully grim effect. Gless does not exude quite the same danger, but she is much more than what those who know her only from television must have feared: Cagney minus the pep, the style and the sleek, svelte frame. She does not succeed in convincing us that she is actually the sad and troubled victim of a rotten background, as King and his adaptor presumptuously imply. But with her odd, aphasic silences and big, gormless gurgles and chuckles, her cosy dimplings and sudden resentments, she brings a villainess as near to life as grand guignol allows.

Her Sheldon is Bill Paterson, whose best moments are at the beginning, when he is seen accepting a literary prize in a voice smug and slimy enough to make at least some of his comeuppance rather satisfying. For most of the rest of the time he has little to do but groan, writhe, graphically lose a foot to Gless's nursing skills, and try not to show his growing desperation; but he still manages to be less bland than James Caan in the film. If there is any reason for seeing the play rather than hiring the video, here it is.

Santa's grotto: Bill Paterson and Sharon Gless get into the festive spirit in *Misery*

## Blue Note debut for Tracey

No ponytail, no Armani suit. Stan Tracey has little in common with the glossy conservatory prodigies who are snapped up by the major international labels. Yet here he is, 66 this month, finally making his debut with Blue Note.

As house pianist at Ronnie Scott's in the sixties, Tracey had the sometimes thankless task of adapting to the demands of all manner of visiting American soloists. He began to set out his own ways with an unorthodox jazz suite inspired by Dylan Thomas's *Under Milk Wood*. The evoca-

tion of character and place has been a recurrent device, and he returns to it again in *Portraits Plus* (Blue Note International 7-80696).

Sonny Rollins, Thelonious Monk, Duke Ellington and Gil Evans are the principal subjects of the tributes here. Do not expect brazen imitations, however. Oblique references to past masters are concealed within swirling arrangements for oboe, the most supple of Tracey's many line-ups. The settings, especially on the bouncing, Rollins-esque

"Newk's Fink" and the more introspective "One for Gill", combine the busyness of a quintet with the stately power of a big band. It is a potent mixture, even though the extended horn solos — locked onto roaring full-throttle most of the time — lack contrast in the long run.

Rhythm and blues enthusiasts will need little encouragement to sample the new compilation of Fats Domino's work from 1949 to the advent of the Beatles era. A monumental collection with an

equally imposing title. *They Call Me The Fat Man... The Legendary Imperial Recordings* (EMI CDP7-96785), stacks up a neat 100 titles.

If that sounds a little excessive, it is worth bearing in mind that the set contains virtually every studio song of value. After leaving Imperial, Domino concentrated increasingly on concert performances. He remains a magnificent live act; this collection forms the bedrock of the repertoire.

CLIVE DAVIS

## The ultimate 14-day guide to Christmas TV and radio

What to watch and when to listen: tomorrow — in a special 80-page, full-colour double issue of *The Culture* — The Sunday Times publishes the definitive, up-to-the-minute critical guide to Christmas and New Year viewing and listening. As well as full national and regional TV and radio listings for 14 days, *The Culture* checks out what's on at theatres, cinemas, concert halls and galleries over the holiday period.

Don't miss *The Culture* double issue tomorrow. The Sunday Times is the Sunday papers

## Early outcuts by the Beatles of grunge

THANKS, in large part to Nirvana,

### ROCK RECORDS

1992 was the year that grunge swept down from the hills and into the high street. The phenomenal success of the Seattle-based trio's casual masterpiece, *Nevermind*, jolted the world of rock on its axis, and the repercussions of the grunge revolution which coalesced around it are now being felt far afield, in movies, fashion and elsewhere.

As the Beatles of grunge, Nirvana have created a demand which is insatiable. In order to mop up for themselves some of the profits being accrued by the bootlegging fraternity, the band this week releases *Incesticide*, a 15-track compilation of early singles, B-sides, sessions on John Peel and Mark Goodier's radio shows, and

### Many fine tracks and even one or two gems lurk in this ragbag of archive material

original demos pre-dating their first recording contract with the Sub Pop label. While not as good as one might expect a *bona fide* new album to be, there are many fine tracks and even one or two gems lurking among this ragbag of archive material.

Like punk and psychedelia before it, grunge trades on a certain aggressively stylised rejection of conventional values. As a fashion statement it puts up a rough, disorganised front, while musically its most obvious characteristics are songs of dizzying energy played on guitars cranked to abrasive volume levels and gilded with fiercely recondite lyrics.

But there are certain characteristics which all leaders of music revolutions have in common. One is a firm understanding, however well disguised, of musical convention. The Beatles were an accomplished harmony group which adopted a strong backbeat: the

Sex Pistols skilfully re-created Chuck Berry riffs; and time and again on *Incesticide*, Nirvana demonstrates their love of a good chorus (on songs like "Sliver" and "Molly's Lips") and show themselves more than capable of laying on a neat harmony vocal where appropriate ("Been a Son").

There is too, a chameleon-like quality to Nirvana's music. When called upon to do a Peel session, they turn in a version of an obscure Devo song called "Turnaround" which sounds more weird and clatter than the song before it. Just like bands on Peel sessions are popularly supposed to sound, in fact.

There are fast, short songs with predatory riffs, such as "Downer", which recall the punk era, and there are more convoluted arrangements like "Aero Zeppelin" and "Big Long Now", both astonishingly accomplished demo recordings where the band's musically skill — and metal roots — show through.

But of all the qualities which this trawl through Nirvana's back pages reveals, the most impressive is the group's, and particularly singer/guitarist Kurt Cobain's, enquiring cast of mind, often manifested in a willingness to write and play the unplayable and somehow make it sound right. By far the weirdest track is "Hairspray Queen", a clanky funk number with a deranged vocal from Cobain. Although wildly out on a limb, the song proceeds with its own peculiar grace and although outrageous, it never sounds gratuitously odd. It is a sure sign of greatness when even the offcuts of an act's early work can sound so absorbing.

DAVID SINCLAIR



Nirvana demonstrate their love of a good chorus

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## 15

CHANNEL 4

**6.00 Trans World Sport** (h) (81914) **7.00 Take Five** for younger viewers (h) (211295) **7.25 Laurel and Hardy** duo (h) (7406355) **7.35 Little Wizards**. Magical cartoon (940648) **8.00 The Sandokan**. Exploits of the pirate prince (84565) **8.30 Wilfrid Kid**. Cartoon (1900730) **8.55 Tintin**. Animated adventure (85000) **9.00 The Great Escape**. A classic (2377682) **9.25 Laurel and Hardy** (5174117) **9.30 Dennis** (8636265)

**9.45 Filmclip**. Adventures of the friendly dolphin (851066)

**10.15 Film: Sword of Monte Cristo** (1951, b/w). George Montgomery stars in a B movie version of Alexander Dumas's tale, directed by Maurice Gerbasi (438575)

**11.45 Little House on the Prairie**. The trials and tribulations of a close-knit Kansas plains family (7396933)

**1.10 Film: Passport to Piniflo** (1949, b/w)

● **CHOICE:** The paradox of this wonderful Ealing comedy is that it is both rooted in its age, the post war Britain of bombed sites and austerity, and has a timeless appeal. For contemporary audiences T.E.B. Clarke's ingenious script about an area of London discovering it was part of Burgundy and seceding from the United Kingdom brilliantly caught the popular mood. Here was a chance to escape rationing and bureaucracy and it, like all dreams, it had to come to an end, the freedom was great while it lasted. The film now is a period piece in the best sense, while offering a raft of enduring jokes and, perhaps, an oblique comment on the dangers of close ties with Europe. Stanley Holloway and Margaret Rutherford head a cast of British comedy stalwarts and the director is Henry Cornelius, who went on to make *Genius* (368640)

**2.40 Film: The Tiffind Thunderbolt** (1902). Another Ealing comedy about a group of villagers determined to stop the Earl's rat sale after the government orders to close the branch line. With Stanley Holloway and Cedric Belfrage (18975846)

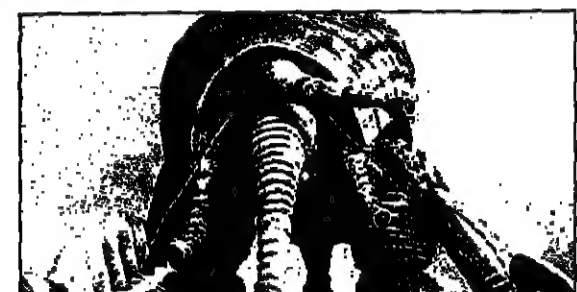
**4.15 Transformations**. The first of four daily examinations of man's relationship to the world around him (8722730)

**5.10 News** and weather (8461579)

**5.15 High Interest: South Africa's Black Economy**. This programme examines, through the eyes of black and white business leaders, the government and ANC policies ways in which the black economy can be developed (8241759)

**6.00 The Miraculous Melopoe**. Australian fantasy series (285)

**6.30 The Cosby Show**. American family comedy show (Teletext) (865)



**Is anybody there? Nasa calling extra-terrestrials (7.00pm)**

- 7.45 **A Touch of Frost.** Excellent police series, directed by Richard Harris from the books by P.D. Winkfield, starring David Jason as a cynical but dedicated detective who is involved in an MP's son involved in a hit-and-run accident; and a police officer disappears, with Sue Johnston. (Oracle) (s) (483310)
- 9.45 **News with Dermot Murnaghan.** (Westwood) (873347)
- 10.05 **The News at Ten.** A new series, starring Gail Kayal as Alan B'Sard, the scheming, ruthless politician. This week he searches for Maxwell's missing millions while his colleague Piers (Michael Troughton) ships aid to Bosnia at his own expense. With guest appearances by Don Henderson and John Challis, who plays the role of *Only Fools and Horses* character Trigger. (BBC) (s) (483340)
- 10.35 **The South Bank Show: Jimi Hendrix.** To mark the fifth anniversary of the guitarist's birth, Mervyn Bragg presents a profile first shown in 1968 (s) (2567372)
- 11.50 **One the Night Before.** The Peck and Trow (440818)
- 12.55am **The ITV Chart Show.** (s) (4975762)
- 2.00 **Film: Amazons (1984).** Sick and silly story starring Madeline Stowe as a doctor who discovers a secret women's organisation determined to seek political power. Directed by Paul Michael Glaser (BBC) (44228)
- 3.45 **Out of Limits.** During sporting action (77553131)
- 4.00 **Pick of the Week.** Regional television highlights presented by Anna Walker (892347)
- 5.30 **Memories of 1970-1991.** Archive film from 1983 (65976)
- 5.30 **Morning News (339363).** Ends at 6.00.

[illegible][illegible]

# UNIT 1

[illegible]

# shopping day till Christmas.



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# High price of a chicken gag

Nigella Lawson digests a piggy helping of American comedy — and a fresh slice of the home-grown variety



**FAT, Dumb, Rich,** the titles of the three programmes in Jonathan Ross's new series, *Americana*, paint the picture: this is Roseanne Arnold as only her

worst enemies see her. Sunday's edition of *Funny Business* gave you an inkling of why that might be seen to number anyone who has ever worked for her.

A smog of rumours surrounds the *Roseanne* show, a whole litany of apocrypha. A former executive producer of her show, which is beamed weekly to 80 million viewers worldwide and reckoned to have made \$140 million on syndication deals last year, once took out an advertisement in the American trade magazine *Variety* to explain why he and the great dame had parted company. "I have chosen not to return to the show next season," the ad ran. "Instead, my wife and I have decided to share a vacation in the relative peace and quiet of Beirut." "Oh yeah," *Roseanne* is reputed to have replied. "And they're not going to think you're funny in Beirut, either."

No, *Roseanne* is not dumb. Nor is she as bad as she's painted. She has just got a big appetite she chops through people. It takes ten scriptwriters to feed her show, and these ten writers (or the ten writers who were on the show when this documentary, *Feeding the Monster*, was made, who have now, all but one, been replaced) were really the subject of the programme.

The now former head writer, Bob Myers, presided over the proceedings, lugubrious, anxious, waiting for those jokes to come that

## TV REVIEW

are going to keep those 80 million viewers laughing, watching. At the start of the programme, which took a look at a week in the making of *Roseanne*, just one 22-minute show, he and his writers were happy enough in the work, crowding over their luck. A writer can make anything from \$2,000 to \$45,000 a week, and most earn something nearer the higher sum. "We get paid huge American dollars," one of his team says, "just to sit around cracking jokes and laugh and eat food out of styrofoam containers."

Telling jokes has never appeared so angst-ridden. If the joke doesn't make *Roseanne* laugh it's not just the joke that's out, in all probability the writer will go with it. The problem, confides an increasingly hollow-eyed Myers, is that in earlier regimes *Roseanne* "felt her view was not being expressed in the final product". The new team know what's expected of them: they must keep *Roseanne* and her public happy. It's a big pressure, as they all, almost one by one, troop past the documentary camera and confide to it. The line is that the show's so popular, "the number of viewers so phenomenal, you don't want to let them down, you don't want one flat moment".

But the real pressure is the paycheck. Tom Arnold, *Roseanne*'s husband and the programme's producer, makes that clear: the more a writer earns for telling a joke, the better that joke has got to be. "It could be over and they'll have to sell their house and things. So it's tense for them."

The show is recorded on a Friday, and by Tuesday they go

into rehearsal. This Tuesday, the one we saw on Sunday's programme, things were not looking good. *Roseanne* was not pleased with the script and the writers were sent back for a rewrite. "Now you're going to see the shit hit the fan," *Roseanne* said, all smiling menace to the documentary crew. "And remember, I'm being nice because I'm on camera."

So the writers pile up the food on their styrofoam containers and prepare for an all-nighter, to consume and be consumed. Later on, they paley emerge, "so burnt out and unfunny". All this for a sitcom. And how they agonise over the jokes. They are working on a chicken gag. "Nine chickens," intones Myers by his word-processor. "Nine chickens — because it's funnier than eight. Because nine — oh, no, nine isn't a prime number..." He pauses, troubled. "But it doesn't matter. It doesn't matter because" — and his voice rises in pitch — "because it's chicken. Chicken's already funny, so it doesn't matter how many." Phew, well, that's a relief, then.

But *Roseanne* doesn't take quite this line on comedy, and this is why her show is funny and why it's hell to work on. She interferences. She doesn't want every line slick and polished and overthought: she wants her fresh.

Only the "real people on the other side of the television screen" understand her. She wants it real, too, and she wants it rough. Other sitcoms produce the gloss with spit and polish, working and reworking each scene until it's perfect. She's happy just with the spit. No take is allowed to be done more than twice: it all must go out on screen still fresh, imperfect, "with rough edges". And she's right. That is



Conspicuous consumption: Roseanne Arnold likes her writing fresh and the jokes to be rough — that's why her show is funny

why *Roseanne* works. It's funny and it flows.

For all the agony the writers have to endure, when we see the clip from the show's opening scene ("Roseanne as Santa at the Mall — which frightens all of us") at the end of *Funny Business*, it's still funny. The traditional, Romantic view of the writer shows an artist starving for his genius. In the age of the television sitcom, he's eaten up by it. Nadia Haggard's film was a study in the conspicuous consumption of television gut-culture.

Against all this, even the grotesque gluttony of Ross's first film

in his new series had a certain innocence. This was "only in America" stuff, and Ross routed it out from a woman who cooks in her dishwasher.

"Really," this machine is being used to a very small fraction of its potential. And Americans are meant to be inventive. It drives me nuts — to a man who cooks dinner on his car's engine. From the Kentucky Fried Chicken Museum — "chicken was his life," murmurs the reverential guide about the founding genius, Colonel Sanders — to a game butcher, selling moose patties, lion roast, alligator (which I once ate, on

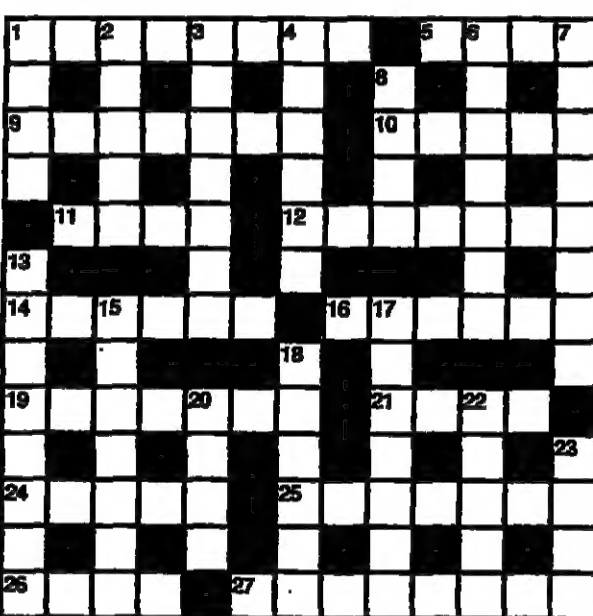
Australia Day, in *The Times* cartoon of all places) and whole skinned rattlesnake.

This kooky stuff is difficult to get right, but Ross pulls it off. He gives it to you straight, no sneering. A bit of teasing, perhaps, but it doesn't pay to knock this kind of kitsch. It's too easy, too obvious. You've got to love it, and Ross does.

I've been meaning to write about *Absolutely Fabulous* for five weeks, and it's now or never. This week was the last in the series, and although it wasn't the best in the run, it's still too good to ignore. Like *Roseanne*, Jennifer Saunders

doesn't really go in for acting, but like her, too, she doesn't act brilliantly. The irresponsible hippyish mother, constantly upbraided by her serious, solid teenage daughter, is a bit of a one-gag routine, but the gag's good, and Saunders's script doesn't falter. And Joanna Lumley is a revelation in the show. Too often she doesn't so much inhabit a role but performs a parody of it. Here, presented as a caricature of a rascally, booze-and-nicotine-propelled fashion editor, she breezes through her part and reveals herself as, of all things, a comic.

## CONCISE CROSSWORD NO 2975



### ACROSS

- 1 Collaborator (8)
- 2 Extra (4)
- 3 Ingredients checker (7)
- 4 Trail (5)
- 5 Thames island (4)
- 6 Contrasting account (7)
- 7 Platform clog (6)
- 8 Cask stopper (6)
- 9 Without pause (3,4)
- 10 Scottish families group (4)
- 11 Stiff (5)
- 12 Sky colour display (7)
- 13 Overdue (4)
- 14 Mine waste pile (4,4)

### DOWN

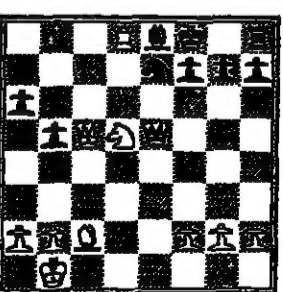
- 1 Square courtyard (4)
- 2 Mussolini state (5)
- 3 Baby articles (7)
- 4 Indigenous (6)
- 5 Pillaging (7)
- 6 Power (8)
- 7 Russian emperor (4)
- 8 Arch wall space (8)
- 9 This evening (7)
- 10 Selecting (7)
- 11 Helix (6)
- 12 Sea race fall (4)
- 13 Stroll (5)
- 14 Exchange (4)

**SOLUTIONS TO NO 2974**  
ACROSS: 1 Roll call 13 Hunger 14 Tennis 19 Prince 20 Erio 21 All 23 Heaviness 24 Set to 25 Betrayer  
DOWN: 1 Rebirth 2 Liaison 3 Cake 4 Looftah 5 Flirt 6 Weigh 7 Blunder 12 Jericho 15 Nursery 16 Sponsor 17 Scrape 18 Pansy 19 Plate 22 Tier

### WINNING MOVE

By RAYMOND KEENE, Chess Correspondent

This position is taken from the game Gufeld — Plaskett, Foreign & Colonial Hastings Premier, 1986/87. Jim Plaskett is one of England's most enterprising grandmasters, but here he is on the receiving end of a combination by the Soviet grandmaster Eduard Gufeld. Can you see how white won quickly? This year's Hastings tournament features the Hungarian prodigy Judit Polgar. Further details from the British Chess Federation on 0424 442500.



a Batsford chess book. The answer and the winners will be printed in *The Times* on the following Saturday.

Solution to last Saturday's competition: 1 Qf6+. The winners are G. Jarvis, Stamford; J.D. Wilks-Jones, Conwy; D. Gorst, Richmond.

### WORD-WATCHING

By PHILIP HOWARD

### SLANG

#### STONKING

- a. Smoking illicit substances
- b. Joy-riding in stolen cars
- c. Excellent, fantastic

#### QUANDONG

- a. A selfish Miss Piggy
- b. A Chinese carry-on
- c. The penis

Answers on page 2

### HERBERT

- a. A scurrilous and libellous journalist
- b. An Anthony Eden hat
- c. Someone considered useless

#### PRONK

- a. To betray a confidence
- b. A donkey
- c. Someone weak or effeminate

## Earth calling anybody

### TV PREVIEW

● **Equinox: ET, Please**  
(Sunday, Channel 4, 7pm)

Two months ago, Nasa embarked on a \$100 million, ten-year programme to search for radio broadcasts in outer space in the hope of finding proof of intelligent life on other planets (Nigella Lawson writes).

This may sound like the usual crazed sci-fi stuff, but this time the scientists are in earnest. Computer software powerful enough to scan the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* in one second is being used in the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence (Seti) programme, tuning in daily to the great galactic radio show and whizzing through the waves to detect any signal that could possibly come from an intelligent source.

Some scientists say such a discovery could save the planet; others warn that we may be making ourselves vulnerable to intergalactic colonisation. Whatever the case — don't hold your breath.

● **Life With Eliza**  
(Sunday, BBC2, 5.45pm)

This is the first of a daily 12-part series which unfolds in ten-minute episodes, with John Sessions playing the part of a suburban clerk much given to snobbish strivings and strategies. It is adapted from the writings of Barry Pain, a now almost completely forgotten Edwardian popular writer, who created this comic Pooterish character and lovable domestic despot. He enjoyed a fashionable revival in the 1930s, and looks all set for another one.

● **Pallas 2**  
(Tuesday, Channel 4, 10pm)

Some producers have all the luck. What better time to launch a second series of the royals-as-soap series — assuming, that is, that the writers have kept up to date with the latest developments. If not, what a terrible time to launch a second series.

● **Birds of a Feather**  
(Christmas day, BBC1, 8pm)

This Christmas edition asks us to believe that Daryl and Chris have been banged up as a result of a fit-up. Robert Kilroy-Silk guests in a send-up of his television get-up, but my guess is that if it is all a put-up job the series will end up with no feasible set-up.

● **Victoria Wood's All-Day Breakfast**  
(Christmas day, BBC1, 9pm)

With Good Morning TV set to replace TV-am any day now, which better commensurate to bring us up to date on the latest developments in daytime television culture than Victoria Wood as one half of the latest husband-and-wife team? The targets may be easy enough — the jolly minutiae of split-end hell and calorie counting — but who else would you trust to bring you the first four-times-daily soap than the Acorn Antiques team of Wood, Walters, Imrie, Blake and Preston?

## Albums to purée your mind

Sweet and  
fragrant or  
spring-loaded —  
the music high  
spots of 1992



**BEFORE** we finally and for ever afterwards roll 1992 up into a little crinkly ball, and throw it in a jocular fashion at a dear semi-conscious relative slumped on the sofa under a paper hat, only for it to ricochet off the copy of the *Radio Times* carefully draped over said relative's face, and roll for ever into irretrievability under the dresser, let us STOP... and look back with a wry grimace and a glass of lukewarm sherry at the albums of 1992.

Famous old people were up and about and busy not dying in '92. Lou Reed was toddling around shedding laser-beams of joy and light into all the dark corners and crevices of the world with *Magic and Loss*, and Neil Young scraped at what could be termed the metaphorical Scabs of Genius, letting *Harvest Moon* bleed forth down his knees and gather in an impressive dot between his toes. They're good; but everyone will tell you that I got other things on my mind.

The US band Pavement released an album this year. It's their debut. It's perfect. Each track has staggering (as in intoxicated) poise and a dozen reeling guitars-spangles per bar. *Slanded and Enchanted* (Big Cat, all formats) will buzz-saw into your head and screw itself in there, so



Levitation: a cold sweat slide on to the Upper Levels

that when you talk, you start leaking the lyrics all over your sentences. Disposable Heroes of Hip-hoprise will probably be keeping Pavement company in the tippy-top part of the charts during 1993. *Hipocrisy is the Greatest Luxury* (Island, all formats) shakes and judders and drips with disenchantment. You need to read a couple of song titles to see just what the lyrics are like — "Television, Drug of the Nation"; "Financial Leprosy"; "Socio Genetic Experiment".

Throwing Muses are, as I explained some weeks back, one of the few reasons why God hasn't torched the planet yet and done with the whole yucky affair. The LP *Red Heaven* (4AD Records, all formats) has a trawl through disgust and hate and other

worldly growly voices in a track called "Furious"; and the sticky and obsessive track, "Pearl".

The Sundays skipped sweetly and fragrantly back on to the music scene after three years absence with *Blind* (Parlophone, all formats). I'm still in love with their habit of shifting around in a haze of spray-fingered, edge-of-obsession guitars and Harrier's soaring, shimmer-edged, chevy vocal things. *What Do You Think?* has a guitar-sound like your heart being thrown over the roof of your house, and even though I may be damned and go to Metaphor Hall for that one, I wouldn't care. I adore this band unreservedly.

Levitation... music is being spring-loaded and

shoved places it's never gone before with *Need For Not* (Rough Trade, all formats). You know that moment just after a nightmare, and you realise time's speeding up and you really do have a very short amount of time to stain some parts of the world with your colours? Levitation has distilled that moment in the track "Hangnail" — a cold sweat slide on to the patented Upper Levels, and "Coerter" just rolls and rolls and rolls into forever.

The Dutch band Bettie Serveert are shuffling towards a Vast Cash Situation with *Palomine* (4AD, all formats). Carol van Dijk has the most affecting fissures and splinters in her voice, and the times have a way of wrapping themselves around your ankles and preventing you from walking away.

Veteran Australian guitarist Ed Kuepper did something he does quite regularly — released another gloriously riddled LP. It is quite amusing that people persist in calling Eric Clapton God, when Ed Kuepper can take every nerve ending in your body and fess and melt them into a lump of solid awe. Kuepper crochets every emotion you had when you were in love, or wanted to believe so badly that you were, and I can't recommend *Hong Kong* (Sire, all formats) enough.

And to finish, PJ Harvey, because she's going to be so important and polarising and just basically brilliant in the next year. This year's *Dry* (all formats) had so many classic times it was hard to believe Mike and Keef hadn't died and decided to write something decent again for a change. There's many mind-purifying albums out there. God I love music.

CAITLIN MORAN

## TV SECRETS: GILLIAN CROSS



I HAVE a terrible weakness for children's soaps, especially *Byker Grove*. I tell myself that I watch them for my work as a children's author, to get a feel for pace and up-to-date dialogue. But really I just like to know what happens next. I noticed recently that PJ paid a visit to the condom machine before spending a romantic evening with Debbie, which was very responsible of him and the BBC. But I don't watch the programme because I approve of it and think it's "very good for children". I just find it compulsive viewing.

# -20°C

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